

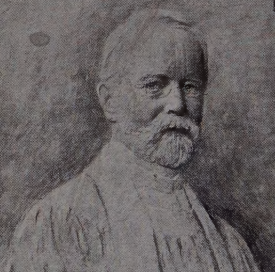
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BY

H. P. LIDDON, D.D., LL.D., D.C.L.

LATE CANON AND CHANCELLOR OF ST. PAUL'S

LONDON

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ADVERTISEMENT

THE four Lectures with which this volume commences were delivered by Dr. Liddon on Tuesday evenings in St. Paul's Cathedral; those on Buddhism in the year 1873, those on St. Paul in 1874. The three papers which complete the volume were prepared for and read to the Oxford Dante Society. The difference of occasion and audience will readily explain the marked change of method in the two parts of the book. For most valuable and kindly help in the preparation of the Dante papers the Editors are indebted to the Rev. Dr. Moore, Principal of St. Edmund Hall. They have also to acknowledge gratefully the assistance and warm encouragement of the Rev. Dr. G. U. Pope, of Balliol College, in connection with the lectures on Buddhism.

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JESUS CHRIST AND BUDDHA.

I. THE LIFE OF BUDDHA.¹

WHEN I propose on this and next Tuesday evening to discuss with you the origin and characteristics of Buddhism, while keeping an eye on Christianity, it may, I fear, be thought at first that such a subject is somewhat needlessly remote from the practical interests of our country and our generation. But, not to insist upon the advantages of an intellectual change of air, the subject is not so removed from practical interests as we may suppose. Whatever we English may think about ourselves, the aspect in which England presents herself to the imagination of Europe and of the world is that of the power which has won, and still holds, the empire of India. No man who believes in a Providence can suppose that we, the inhabitants of a small island in the remote West, have been introduced to these high destinies for nothing, or only for commercial or political ends; and as soon as the eye catches sight of any higher horizons than those which might

¹ Lecture delivered in St. Paul's Cathedral, on Tuesday evening, January 21, 1873.

have satisfied a Phœnician or a Roman conqueror, it is at once felt that the greatest interest must attach to the mental and religious history of the highly-gifted races with which we are now so closely connected. And Buddha was an Indian prince. Buddhism was for two centuries an exclusively Indian religion. Although driven from Central India five centuries since, it still lingers in the north, beneath the shadow of the Himalayas in Nepaul, and further north-west, in Cashmere; it is still vigorous to the south in our own island of Ceylon. It does not simply fringe the Indian peninsula; to the north and east it dominates in those dense populations which are so impervious to European ideas and European enterprise: Burmah and Siam, Tonquin and Cochin-China, are Buddhist. Buddhism dominates throughout a great part of China and Japan; it is the religion of Thibet; it is still found in Tartary and Mongolia. In short, we cannot move in the East without encountering it, wellnigh on all sides of us; and if it did not thus appeal to our political instincts as Englishmen, it would still appeal, at least as powerfully to our human, not to speak of our Christian, interests. A religion which has lived on for four-and-twenty centuries, and which, it is probable, counts more votaries at this moment than any other on the face of the globe,—probably not less than a third of its inhabitants,—is a subject of study to which

thoughtful men need not be coaxed by any merely national interest, at least if it still holds that to be a man is to deem nothing human strange. Besides which Buddhism, side by side with differences of the most vital and fundamental character that can be conceived, presents some singular points of resemblance to Christianity,—in its ethical teaching, in its law of self-propagation, and notably in the character of some of its institutions; so that, if it were only possible to do no more than glance at a subject so rich in interest, we need not fear disappointment. As it is, our danger lies in the difficulty of honestly treating a vast subject within very limited space, without stripping all the flesh from the skeleton, without reducing a story, which says so much to feeling and to thought, to the form and proportions of an index or a dictionary.

I.

Buddhism was an attempted reform of, it was a revolt against, Brahminism,—an older historical religion which had been for many centuries in possession of India,—as even now, although exposed to more or less rapid decomposition under the influence of European thought, it holds much of its ancient ground. What were the circumstances of Brahminism at the date of the foundation of Buddhism?

It is only within the last hundred years that it has been at all possible to answer a question like this. The knowledge of ancient India which was derived from the early Jesuit missionaries was inevitably vague and inaccurate; and for the rest, Indian thought was studied either in the sparse notices of the ancient Greek classical writers, or in the prejudiced pages or mutilated translations of the Mohammedans. Commentaries on the Vedas—the ancient religious Indo-Aryan poetry—were read in translations from Persian translations of the Sanskrit originals; there were Arabian versions, which were distrusted in Europe, as likely, for more reasons than one, to misrepresent Indian manners and theology. A change came with the establishment of our Indian empire, and the accompanying necessity of studying fundamentally the languages and ideas of our new subjects. Sir William Jones—whose statue faces me—gave the first great impulse to those investigations; but the name which is most prominently associated with the discovery to Europe (for it was nothing less) of the philosophy and religion of the great Aryan race was that of Colebrooke. The formation of the Asiatic Society of Calcutta, and the study of Sanskrit, the literary and sacred language of ancient India, were the two great steps in this direction; and the labours of scholars like the late Professor Wilson, Eugene Burnouf, and Professor Max Müller have

carried us onwards to our present—still advancing and still imperfect—knowledge of an antiquity which, from its bearing on the languages and civilisation of the Indo-Germanic races in Europe, as well as from its relations to the Eastern world, has an interest all its own.

These studies reveal to us a world of thought and activity which is the produce of centuries. Here is a sacred literature with its religious code, its several systems of philosophy, its pious legends, its practical commentaries designed for edification, its cherished historical traditions, its liturgies, its religious instructions, its sacred epics. But these are merely so many incrustations, accumulated during centuries upon primitive texts which had become more sacred with the lapse of ages. Beyond, before, above all else, in the Indian literature stand the Vedas,—books, as the word signifies, presumably at least, of the highest knowledge. They embody the earliest traditions of the Aryan race; they are poems of the most primitive type, which were written out upon palm-leaves some twelve or more centuries before the coming of our Lord. At least this description would apply to the Rig-Veda, the most ancient and the most venerated of the four Vedas: it gives us a picture of the family life of India in the earliest period known to history. It must have been composed in the Punjab, the country of the seven rivers which form the

Indus, and at a period when as yet caste did not exist in India. It is a collection of hymns for family worship conducted upon the green turf, under the blue vault of heaven, accompanied by sacrifices of the rudest and most domestic description; hymns, such as a primitive, highly-gifted race, itself inheriting echoes of a Divine tradition, would compose when face to face with the natural features of north-western Hindustan. All the beauty of nature, all its rigour, its productiveness, as well as its surprises and disappointments, icy cold and tropical heat, the equinoctial gales and the outburst of spring life, come before us in these poems. They rarely if ever contain practical or moral precepts; they are passionate invocations to the power which, under various names and conceptions, is believed to rule the natural world; prayers that He would make it a fit and serviceable house for His faithful worshippers. If any creed can be here detected, it is perhaps a monotheism, untainted as yet by the pantheism of a later age; but constantly tending by its realistic invocations of the various powers of nature to become a polytheism. Fire is invoked as Agni; the sun, as one of the greatest benefactors of humanity, as Surya; the atmosphere penetrated by sunlight as Indra; the vault of heaven as Varuna; earth in its robe of beauty as Prithivi; the terrific mountain blasts which sweep the forests as Rudra. Each aspect of nature

is individualised; each is a Deva, or luminous spirit, to the primitive Aryan. But the Veda is also full of human passion; there is no attempt to conceal the hatred and contempt for the Dasyu or primitive race, which the Aryan conquerors of the Punjaub had driven southwards. The Dasyu is a brigand; he has neither law nor faith; he despises heaven; he is vowed to execration; heaven is invoked to blast, to destroy him. For himself the worshipper prays for increase of goods, for flocks, for horses—later for gold; always for something material, for victory, for fortune, for happiness—immediate and complete.

How Brahminism—an elaborate system of polytheism, priesthood, and caste—superseded this primitive Indian life and religion, we can as yet rather guess than say. But we see the beginnings of the process in the Vedas themselves. Criticism has remarked three distinct stages or types of thought in the process before us; (1) the most ancient, and the purest, original in form, monotheistic in creed, dwelling on the most obvious features of the world of nature; (2) a second, with more of speculation and less of fresh feeling, elaborating and dwelling more intensely upon the nature-powers around man, making a step thus towards polytheism; (3) a third, in which later speculation has got the upper hand of early feeling, in which abstraction is piled upon abstraction, till all becomes indistinct, and men are willing to recover

definiteness at any cost, though it be such only as Brahminism could give. How the family became lost in the tribe; how the solemn sacrifice of the horse was substituted for the simpler sacrifices and libations of the Rig-Veda; how the family poets were transformed into a sacrificing class for the whole tribe, guarding their entire literary inheritance as a sacred literature; how prayer, personified as Brahma, became itself an object of worship, and the starting-point for a construction or reconstruction of the Hindu Pantheon; how finally this gradual change or development of a faith expressed itself politically in the growth of caste—these are points which can here and now only be glanced at. By the seventh century before Christ, the Hindu Trimurti, or Triad, of Brahma, Siva, and Vishnu, was well established in the popular faith; there was a vast collection of lower deities; the ancient vedas were used, but overlaid by commentaries, which appropriated them to Brahminical purposes; the Brahmin caste had, after a struggle, conquered the warriors and the statesmen, and placed itself in the forefront of society and thought.

As masters of the religious literature and ideas of the country, the Brahmin caste controlled its political rulers, the immense number of petty sovereigns who ruled ancient India. But in questions of government, of peace and war, the kingly and governing class still held its own; it formed a second caste, that of the warriors

or kshatriyas. The people, engaged in agriculture and commerce, formed a third caste, the vaiçyas; and below this was a fourth, the sowing-class or sudras, probably the relics of more ancient conquered populations. Not that they were the lowest base of ancient Indian society; they were honourable compared with the mongrel race, as it was deemed, which resulted from incidental connection between the higher castes, and which formed a refuse population, the colluvies of all the caste-impurity of the land.

Now Buddhism stood towards this earlier system of life and thought in the relation of a revolt. It was a social and a doctrinal rebellion against Brahminism. Socially, it rebelled against the system of caste; it protested in the name of Justice that all had a right to the knowledge and the privileges which were monopolised by the Brahmins. Doctrinally, it attempted to provide an escape for the human soul from the miseries of transmigration to another body after death which the Brahminical creed insisted on; and it did this not by denying transmigration altogether, but by pointing to the possibility of self-annihilation, through contemplation and virtue, in the Nirvâna. Upon this subject more hereafter. Enough has been said to show that Buddhism was no more an original religion than Mohammedanism; that it took a great deal of Brahminism for granted while endeavouring to improve on it; that it pre-

supposes Brahminism, and is a modified continuation of it, although at deadly feud with its later representations; and we may now turn to the life of the remarkable man to whom the new religion owes its origin.

II.

Here, perhaps, it may be well to say a word as to some of our sources of information. First among these must be placed the French translation of *The Lotus of the Good Law*, as the work is named, by M. Eugene Burnouf, with his accompanying dissertations; as well as his *Introduction to the History of Indian Buddhism*. Then several papers in the *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society*, and the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, especially the sketch of Buddhism from the Nepalese Sutras in the second volume of the former series, may be mentioned. Mr. Hodgson was for many years British Resident at Nepaul, and to his enterprise, his scholarship, and his unbounded liberality, Europe is mainly indebted for its present knowledge of the subject before us.

Not to go further into particulars on this matter, much fuller information will be found in Professor Max Müller's article on "Buddhism" in the first volume of his collected Essays, an article which shows at once the vastness of the subject, the caution with which almost any conclusions must be received in

our present state of knowledge, and the rich crop of information which may be expected from future investigations.

There is some difficulty in fixing the date at which the founder of Buddhism appeared in history. The earliest of the fourteen dates assigned to him in Thibet is 2422 B.C. In China, Mongolia, and Japan he is generally placed at 950 or 940 B.C.: among the southern Buddhists of Siam, Burmah, and Ceylon at 543 B.C. The latter would seem to be the probable date; to omit other considerations, the earlier dates do not leave sufficient room for the extraordinary development of Brahminism, itself the work of very many centuries, which Buddhism presupposes. The scene of his birth was at the town of Kapilavatthu, capital of a small kingdom at the north of the modern Oude, and at the foot of the range which divides it from Nepaul. His father, Suddhodana, was head of the family of the Sakyas, and king of the territory. Buddha was thus of the warrior, and not of the Brahmin caste, a point of much significance. His mother's beauty, her intelligence, her virtue, are celebrated in the most glowing terms in the Buddhist sutra—the *Lalita-vistâra*. She retired, to give him birth, to the beautiful park or gardens of Lumbini, some twenty miles north-east of Kapilavatthu: she died seven days after her labour. Her child's personal name was Siddhatthu, but he is more generally known

as Sakya-mouni, *i.e.* the solitary or monk of the Sakya family. He is also the Samana Gotama, or ascetic of the sun-descended race of the Gôtamides; the Sougata, or saviour of men; the Bhagavat, the blessed or fortunate one, the name commonly given him in the writings of Nepaul; the Arhat, or Venerable One, a title which he shares with his most distinguished disciples; the Bodhisatta, one who by science and virtue is in a fair way to become Buddha; the Tathâ-gata,—the title which he gave himself,—one who had gone as his predecessors, the earlier Buddhas: above all, the Buddha, which means the Man of Science, the Enlightened, the Awakened One. This indeed, his most famous, is not a proper or personal name; it describes a quality; others became Buddha; the Prince of Kapilavatthu was the Buddha, *par excellence*: but this, as well as the other titles, excepting his personal and family names, did not originally belong to him, but were given or assumed, in the course of years.

The infant was consigned to the care of his maternal aunt, Mahâpajâpati Gotamî, who became one of his most attached converts in later years; he was pronounced by the eminent Brahmin Asita to have the thirty-two principal signs and the eighty secondary marks of the great man; he was soon able, as a boy, to learn all that his teachers had to tell him. In his earliest years he was disinclined for amusements, pen-

sive, fond of retirement. The king's advisers insisted on his marriage, in order to defeat a Brahminical prophecy that he would abdicate the throne to become an ascetic. After taking time for reflection, the boy of sixteen years consented; if only his wife had high personal qualities, she might, he said, be of any caste of the people, or even of the enslaved race, as well as of the Brahmins or the warriors. A commission of old men made a selection of women in Kapilavatthu, from among whom Siddhatthu had to choose: but, at her father's demand, he was not allowed to win his bride until he had proved himself, in Indian learning as well as in athletic exercises, the best man of his day. It is right to add that all this has been treated by Professor Wilson as an allegory, indicating the philosophical position of Buddhism; his contention being that we know almost nothing of the founder of Buddhism. But this fervid scepticism is checked by the journals of the Chinese pilgrims who visited the sites and verified the traditions of the early Buddhist writings some centuries afterwards.

Buddha lived until the age of twenty-eight in the three palaces which his father had built for him, surrounded with all that wealth, luxury, and affection could yield; but he was not happy. To him the world, or rather the universe; for he included the Indian deities in his melancholy estimate, appeared to labour under the threefold misery of ignorance,

desire, and existence. He believed that he could attain to that higher intelligence of "the Good Law," the communication of which to others would put an end to human misery; by which the highest knowledge would be attained; by which desire and passion would be extinguished; by which the miseries of existence, of death, which leads only to transmigration, would be escaped in the self-accomplished annihilation of Nirvâna. His father's suspicions were aroused, and every effort was made to detain him. But the sights which met him in every direction only matured his resolution. On his way to the gardens of Lumbini he encounters a decrepit old man: he reflects that he too will become old; what right has he to enjoy himself? He turns his carriage in thoughtful sorrow back to the royal palace. On another similar occasion he meets a sick man, in great suffering and want, in an advanced stage of illness, and breathing with difficulty. "Health," he cries, "is but a dream; who, having seen this, would think of enjoying himself?" Again he turns homeward in disquiet and humiliation. On another side of the city, and on a third occasion, he meets a funeral; the dead is followed by a long procession of mourners, whose grief is shown in all the demonstrative forms of Eastern vehemence. He again utters a few passionate words on the misery of life: "Let us go back," he exclaims: "I will try to effect a deliverance." Once more he meets a bhikshu or

mendicant ascetic, with a collected, disciplined appearance, with downcast eyes and subdued gait. On his inquiry as to who it was, "This man," replies the servant in attendance, "is a bhikshu; he has renounced all the pleasures of desire and leads now an austere life; he is engaged in crushing out self and has become a mendicant. Without passion, without desire, he goes about asking alms."

Siddhatthu's resolution was taken: it was now only a question of opportunity. He opened his design to his wife, who in vain endeavoured to dissuade him. He then told his Royal father. "What can I do for thee, my son," cried the king, in tears, "to make thee change thy purpose? Myself, this palace, these servants, this realm — all is thine." "Four things," replied Siddhatthu, "I ask: and if thou canst grant them I will remain with thee. That old age may never come to me: that I may for ever enjoy the beauty of youth: that illness may never assail me: that my life may know no limits, no decline." "Thou askest for the impossible, my child," cried the king in agony. "At least," replied the prince, "if thou canst not grant me these four things, deign to grant me one, one only. Let it be that, when I go hence, I may escape the vicissitudes of transmigration."

An Indian would have thought it just as reasonable to ask that the sun's course might be changed. Argument was no longer possible: the prince must

be prevented, if possible, by force from taking flight. The family of Sakyas was convoked: the palace was surrounded with guards; the king himself superintended in person the efforts of his officers. But it was to no purpose. With the aid of a trusted confidant the prince escaped from the palace of Kapilavattu at midnight; his heart for a moment sank within him, as he turned to cast a last look upon the home which he was leaving, it might be for ever. "Never again," he said, "will I enter the town of Kapila till I have secured the supreme dwelling, the pure intelligence, which makes free from old age and death." He rode hard all night; he passed the frontier of his father's realm: and when the morning broke he dismounted, stripped himself of his pearls and of his royal ornaments, and sent back his horse and servant; cut off with his sword the long hair which marked him as belonging to the warrior-caste, and changed his robe, made of the finest silk of Benares, with a huntsman who was dressed in deer-skins. In this guise he then crossed to the southern side of the Ganges, to the kingdom of Magadha. Some of the most celebrated Brahmin solitaries lived on a mountain near the capital town of this State; and the prince became a disciple of two famous teachers, Alata and Rudraka, who, however, failed to satisfy him. The Brahmin doctrines, as explained by their highest representatives, did not, he said, "create

indifference for the things of the world; did not secure enfranchisement from passion; provided no insurance against the vicissitudes of existence; did not lead to peace of soul—to the Nirvâna.” Siddhatthu withdrew publicly from the class of Rudraka, five of whose disciples accompanied him; and for six years he devoted himself to the practice of the severest austerities in the retreat of Uruvelâ. At the end of that period he became persuaded that asceticism does not lead the soul to the supreme knowledge; and accordingly, while still remaining in the hermitage of Uruvelâ, he took abundant food, while yet continuing his meditations. This was considered by his five disciples as a fall which ought to forfeit their respect and confidence; and they left him for one of the great Brahminical establishments in Benares. It was in the solitude of the later period of his retreat that Siddhatthu would appear to have finally determined the principles of his system, and the rules of life which he meant to propose to his followers. Here, too, his deerskin dress fell to pieces, and by way of marking his progress in asceticism, as understood in India, he dressed himself in the rags of a winding-sheet which had been thrown round a corpse in a neighbouring cemetery, and which was disinterred for the purpose.

But he was still short of the object of his efforts. “By all that I have acquired,” he said, “I have far surpassed human law; but I have not yet succeeded

in clearly distinguishing the really venerable wisdom. Not yet have I reached the true way of understanding. My present attainments do not really put an end to old age, to sickness, to death."

However, the moment of the ecstasy in which Siddhatthū believed that he did thus attain to the supreme intelligence was at hand. The place is marked with special particularity in the Buddhist literature; it shares their importance with Uruvelā, the scene of his six years' retirement, and Kusinârâ, the scene of his death. It is termed Bodhimanda, the seat of understanding: and all the details of the ecstasy are preserved with scrupulous care. We are told how the future Buddha met a man who was cutting down herbs, and asked him for sufficient to make a carpet with; which he carefully arranged with the foliage downwards and the root upwards, under a species of fig-tree, which, as the Bodhidrouma or tree of intelligence, became an object of Buddhist veneration, and was visited ten centuries later by the Chinese pilgrims. Here he remained motionless for a day and a night, plunged in contemplation, until at last the perfect and absolute science (Bodhi) came to him, illuminated him, changed him into the Buddha. Just at the breaking of the dawn, when they beat the drums, the triple science was reached by him. He rose, with the energy of a profound conviction that he had mastered the remedy for human pain: he rose the sincere

founder of a new and powerful religion, albeit a miserably false one.

He was now thirty-six years old, and he spent nineteen years from this date in propagating his religion in Central and Eastern India. He had to pass through a new period of hesitation and anguish. Was it not enough to have discovered for himself the secret of human deliverance : must he encounter the opposition which would follow any attempt to announce it to others ? Three times he was on the point of yielding to this passing weakness ; he overcame it by a reflection which, while it seriously limits the claims which were advanced on his behalf, is illustrative of the great common sense which accompanied his singular reveries. " All living beings," said he, " may be ranged in three classes : one-third lives in falsehood, and may be expected to remain there ; another third lives in truth ; another in uncertainty. Whether I teach or not, they who are fixed in falsehood will not know the law, and they who are in the truth will know it. But they who are in uncertainty depend upon my efforts : they will know the law if I teach it, they will remain ignorant if I am silent." An admirable reflection for any man who proposes on whatever scale to do good to his fellow-creatures. There are many who do not need, and many who cannot profit by his efforts ; but there is an intermediate class, within and for which he works, and which will

depend altogether upon his activity and determination.

The Buddha (for such he now was) bethought himself of teaching his new knowledge to his old friends, the Brahmins Uddaka and Alara. They, however, were both dead—beyond the reach of his specific for escaping transmigration, so he determined to seek his fugitive disciples at Benares. He turned his face northward, towards the Ganges: he found his disciples in a wood near the great city Benares. They were still angry, and agreed, as he approached, that they would not show him any mark of respect, or touch his mendicant vestment, or his box for alms, or give him aught to drink, or offer him a carpet, or rise from their seats at his approach. “But as he came on,” says the Sutra, “a resistless instinct overcame them in spite of themselves. One after another they rose; they lavished upon him successively all the marks of hospitality and consideration which they had just forbidden themselves; and he in turn announced to them that he was now the Buddha, who knew all, saw all, understood all, and only waited to instruct them in the secret of existence, in the way to arrive at Nirvâna.” They were from that moment devoted to him; and, as the scene of his first public preaching, Benares became more sacred in the eyes of Buddhists than it had already been for ages in those of Brahmins. Of his work at Benares we know little;

for here the *Lalita-vistâra* fails us; and no other Sutra accessible to Europeans enters so fully into the details of his life. His remaining years were passed in incessant preaching. Some of his disciples followed him in his wanderings; others retired to woods and solitudes to practise the contemplations by which they might attain the wished-for rest of *Nirvâna*. He was protected by powerful monarchs on either bank of the Ganges, especially by *Bimbisara*, the friend of his early years, and, after an interval of estrangement and persecution, by his son: the former offered him a residence near his capital, where the Buddha lived for a long period and made his most considerable converts. The king of *Sravasti* was equally hospitable; and at last he won his own family to his convictions. His father, the aged king of *Kapilavatthu*, came after a parting of twelve years' duration to visit a son, the reputation of whose sanctity and knowledge was spreading through Northern Hindustan; and the visit was solemnly returned: the race of the *Sakyas* furnished converts to the new creed, especially *Ananda*, nephew of the Buddha, whose name enters largely into the literature of his life.

Of his struggles with the angry Brahmins we know little; but there can be no doubt that his success roused their fears and wounded their vanity. The later legends describe a species of religious tournament, in which, before a king and an assembled

people, the Buddha defeated his Brahmin opponents; the Chinese pilgrims collected traditions to the effect that the Brahmins menaced and nearly took his life. The wonder is that they did not take it; there can be no doubt what they would have done, could they have seen its importance in the light of later centuries.

Buddha died at the ripe age of eighty, surrounded by an enormous crowd of disciples and mendicants, and attended by his devoted relative, Ananda. He knew that his end was near. He crossed the Ganges for the last time; paid a last visit to the sacred city Benares; and, in his quality of Arhat, bestowed a religious commission on several mendicants, specially on Soubhadra. It was in a wood near the town of Kusinârâ that he breathed his last, believing himself, believed by his followers, to have attained the supreme bliss of ecstatic annihilation. The details of his funeral have been scrupulously described. His body was burned eight days after his decease; the struggles for the ashes threatened even bloodshed. The ashes were enclosed in a golden urn, and carried to the public hall of the town, where, during seven days, feasts were celebrated in his honour. The relics were then divided into eight parts, and distributed among eight towns, each of which built a shrine (tochaitya) for their reception.

The founder of the new religion was dead, but his

followers assembled in a species of synod to systematise his teaching. The first meeting lasted for seven months. The result was that the teaching of the master was drawn up under the threefold heads of precepts, discipline, and philosophy; but a century later abuses in discipline made a second assembly or synod necessary. It sat for eight months. It decided, *inter alia*, that salt might not be kept for more than ten days; that nothing might be eaten after mid-day; that no act might be undertaken without permission; that milk might not be taken after a repast; that splendid carpets were not to be purchased for sitting on; that jewels set in gold and silver might not be worn. The schisms which grew up after this second synod led to a third, under the King Asoka,—the Constantine, as he has been called, of Buddhism,—about 246 years before Christ. Asoka, after being a vehement partisan of Brahminism, was a passionate convert to the rival religion; and at his instigation, during a sitting of nine months, the Buddhist sacred books were digested and collected. A fourth synod was held in Cashmere, during the very time that our Lord was in Palestine, between the years 10 and 30 of the Christian era. The occasion was the claim of a certain mendicant of Cashmere to be an incarnation of Mara, the god of death. At this assembly the doctrines and the sacred writings of Buddhism received their definitive form; and although

its authority was not acknowledged by the southern Buddhists, it completed, for all practical purposes, and for the great bulk of Buddhist believers, the work which had begun five centuries and a half before.

For nearly three centuries Buddhism was confined to the districts of India which gave it birth. It was only after the third synod, held in the year 246 B.C., that it became a missionary power. It was then resolved to make a great effort for the conversion of other races; and although the stories of the successes achieved by the Buddhist ascetics can hardly be regarded as trustworthy, it seems clear that they penetrated with success into Cabul, Cashmere, even the Caucasus; that they came into contact with the Syro-Greek civilisation of Western Asia, and were heard even in Macedonia. Asoka did much to organise and sustain these efforts; his own son, Mahinda, undertook the conversion of Ceylon, in B.C. 245. He was accompanied by four disciples, and the young monarch of the island assigned them a garden for their public conferences. Here Mahinda preached for twenty-six days, and at the end of that period received the adhesion of the king and a great part of his people to the Buddhist doctrines. Ceylon was endowed with two of the greatest Buddhist relics—the alms-box which Sakya-Mouni had carried as a mendicant, and a branch of the tree under which he had, in ecstasy, become the Buddha. When the king

of the island sent an embassy to the Roman Emperor Claudius, it must have been entirely Buddhist. Pliny probably means Buddha when he says that the inhabitants of Taprobana adored Hercules—an odd kind of equivalent to Buddha no doubt, but the best Pliny could think of. When the Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hien visited the island at the beginning of the fifth century of the Christian era, he found in it a much more intense and fervid Buddhism than that on the Indian continent. A long line of kings of Ceylon, with few exceptions, were devoted Buddhists; Ceylon alone produced a copious and rich Buddhist literature. From it the new religion spread to the countries east of the Ganges—to Burmah, Siam, the whole western and central portion of the Burmese peninsula; the eastern side, Cochin-China and Tonquin, would seem to have been Buddhised—if I may coin the word—from China. Into China Buddhism was introduced first after the third synod—two centuries and a half before our Lord—but with poor success. It was in the year A.D. 65 that the reigning Emperor sent a commission of inquiry into India, which resulted in the return of some eminent Buddhist ascetics, and the building of a magnificent convent in Lo-yang. The Indian books (the *Lalita-vistâra*, in particular) were translated into Chinese; the new religion made its way in the imperial family; it profited by the division of the empire after the fall of the Han dynasty; it

profited by the restored unity of the empire under the Tsin dynasty. Then began that wonderful intercourse of pilgrimages between China and India, some records of which poured such a flood of light about fifteen years ago upon Buddhist history, and which deepened and consolidated Buddhism in what is now, perhaps, the chief seat of its power.

The Buddhist propaganda in Central and West Central Asia was earlier in point of time. The missionaries of Buddhism were preaching in Bactriana at least sixty years before the Incarnation of our Lord; Alexander Polyhistor refers to them as the Samaneans. St. Clement of Alexandria was much interested in what he heard of them in the second century of the Christian era. The powerful prince Kanichka,—whose empire at the beginning of the Christian era included Cabul and part of India, while it extended to the banks of the Oxus,—became a fervid Buddhist, and threw the whole weight of his political influence into the cause of this creed. From Bactriana, Buddhism penetrated northward, and into the western kingdoms of Central Asia, the region of Khotan, Yarkand, and Kashgar, with the actual condition of which the English public has been recently made familiar by the highly interesting and instructive work of Mr. Commissioner Shaw. From these countries of Western Turkestan Buddhism was driven by the great Mussulman invasion of the twelfth century. It does

not seem to have reached Thibet until the seventh century of the Christian era. The reigning monarch sent his prime minister, Tuomi, with sixteen others, into India, in the year A.D. 632, to study the Buddhist doctrines and bring back the sacred books. On his return, the king built the great Buddhist temple of Lhasa, and married two princesses,—one a Nepalese and the other a Chinese, both of whom had been brought up as Buddhists. They came with an immense assortment of Buddhist books and images; but the first Grand Lama, Tischeu, who also came from India, was not established before the middle of the ninth century. He was made administrator of the kingdom by the reigning king, and thus his successors became sovereigns of the country, after the reform of the Lamas in the fourteenth century—a singular institution, which is no essential part of the Buddhist hierarchy, but is profoundly inspired by the spirit of Buddhism.

Buddhism, while achieving these conquests beyond the Himalayas, was losing ground in the country which gave it birth. The great struggle with Brahminism appears to have already begun in the second century of the Christian era. Buddhism was not finally beaten and expelled from Bengal until the fourteenth century. Of the details of the struggle we know little, although it is not difficult to understand its motives. The persecuted Buddhists took refuge

in Nepaul at the southern foot of the Himalayas, or they passed into China and Thibet; and at this date nothing remains to attest their ancient power in large districts of India but the deserted stoupas, which, like Druidical stones in this country, witness to the power of a religion that has passed away.

It is, as it appears to me, impossible not to recognise in the founder of Buddhism one of the most interesting and beautiful figures which are to be found in the annals of Paganism. Here is a young man, born in a happy time, born of a just and generous father and a loving mother, cradled in wealth and luxury, welcomed to life by all that it has best to offer in the way of outward advantages, the heir of a noble name, the heir of a throne. He is virtuous; he is intellectual; he is good-looking; he is popular; he marries a young wife who is also pre-eminently beautiful and good; life opens on him, as far as outward blessings go, with all the glow and splendour of an Eastern morning. But his happiness is poisoned by the spectacle of sufferings around him, which are too great, too many, too rooted in the fixed conditions of human life, to admit of his relieving them; and his sense of these sufferings is heightened by his inherited belief in the transmigration of souls from body to body, a doctrine which, while making existence a curse, makes escape from it, if possible, a blessing. His thoughts, his studies, his enthusiasms are thus

grounded in a most unselfish and generous impulse; and when he renounces his home and his crown, his wealth and his power, to become a beggar and a solitary, to meditate, amid self-imposed hardships, upon the ultimate secrets of human destiny, we do better perhaps in admiring the loftiness of his motive than in wondering at the results of his career. Clearly his was a character to which power over the outward circumstances of his fellows was of little account in comparison with power to elevate, perhaps to govern, hearts and minds; he belonged to that higher order of men who think more of the charities of life than of its outward advantages; more of independence of conscience than of the lure of easy circumstances; more of the happiness of multitudes than of personal privileges and position; more of the future destinies of man than of the splendid but transient present. If in his efforts to admit all to the knowledge which Brahminism reserved for a favoured few, and to modify the consequences of a doctrine which, perhaps inevitably, he never thought of questioning, he became the victim of a self-deluding and stupefying ecstasy, and the author of a creed which is a thinly disguised atheism, this must not blind us to his real titles to respectful sympathy. If we measure his failure in the light of a revelation of absolute Truth which he never heard of, we must admit that his love of such truth as he hoped to win, and the sacrifices he so cheerfully and

unflinchingly made in order to attain it, are Christian at least as well as Pagan virtues, and that it may be impossible for honest Christians to think over the career of this heathen prince without some keen feelings of humiliation and shame.

In truth, from age to age, Tyre and Sidon are rebuking the indifference of Capernaum to its awful privileges; and Sakya-Mouni is not the last Pagan who might read a useful lesson to the children of the Church.

I have not suggested, except indirectly, the comparison or contrast between Christianity and Buddhism which it was proposed to institute. But much will have occurred to you incidentally, almost inevitably, in what has been said. And why Buddhism succeeded as it did, and how in its conceptions of heaven, of life, of destiny, of conduct, it contrasts with the Faith which dates from Calvary and Pentecost, will be the subject of another lecture.

JESUS CHRIST AND BUDDHA.

II. COMPARISON BETWEEN BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY.¹

THE review of the life of Buddha, and of the historical development of Buddhism, which engaged our attention last Tuesday will probably have suggested a question that, in one form or another, presses heavily upon the thought of the present generation. That question is, whether Christianity is or is not ESSENTIALLY different from this and the other great religions of the world; whether it is, so to speak, in the same line with them, the product of a race, the product of the intellectual and moral circumstances of an epoch; or whether it has that in it which makes it altogether distinct, so that while they are the shadow, it is the reality,—while they are the human and the relative, it is the absolute and the Divine?

This question belongs to our present state of knowledge rather than to that of former centuries. When men knew little of the great Eastern religions, with the one exception of Mohammedanism, it never occurred to them to compare Buddhism or Parseeism or

¹ Lecture delivered in St. Paul's Cathedral, on Tuesday evening, January 28, 1873.

Confucianism with Christianity in this way. They lived, like the Tyrolese peasantry in their beautiful valleys, in an intellectual world whose horizons were sharply bounded on this side and on that; and they never thought of asking themselves the question, what was the aspect, what the relative beauty, of the plains which stretched away beyond the mountains which limited their view. It is far otherwise now. And although it will be quite impossible to give a full answer to so grave a question as that before us, we may do well to keep it in view during the course of the ensuing discussion.

I.

(a) Here it is natural to reflect that a true and a false religion, the most absolutely true and the most certainly and irretrievably false, must, from the nature of the case, have much in common. They must have many common elements, and especially for this reason: both religions, the true and the false, have to make themselves at home among men; to provide for their recognition, their permanence,—if it may be, their empire; and in order to do this, they have, in varying degrees, to accommodate themselves to certain fixed, unchanging conditions of thought, life, feeling, social organisation. The human intellect is the same thing in Thibet and in Europe; the human heart is under the empire of the same attractions and

repulsions in one continent as in another ; the ultimate laws of social organisation and the conditions of its modification are everywhere the same. Every religion, be it true or false, has to take these things into account, at least to a certain extent ; and in its outward exhibition of itself every religion is influenced by them. Human nature, in short, reflects, or inflicts, a common human element on all religions, true and false alike. No religion can ignore the laws of association in a common conviction ; the laws of propagating a common conviction ; the necessity of expressing a common conviction in language, in the outward circumstances, habits, surroundings of life. And the result, let me repeat, is that all religions, the truest and the most false, have, from the nature of the case, certain elements in common ; they have that in common which is imposed on them from without by the laws of that society and life with which they deal. And these common features are often so numerous and so complex, they say so much to the eye and to the imagination, that men, forgetting the underlying and ineffaceable distinctness, are tempted to exclaim, "Surely these religions are merely different forms of the same thing ; plants, both of them, of human growth, with only such differences as are imposed on them respectively by their date, their country, their circumstances." And yet such a judgment is irrational, since it confuses the accidental with the essential not less

completely than would a naturalist who should mistake like influences of climate or training on the colour or habits of two distinct animals for specific identity of type.

Now Buddhism undoubtedly presents some resemblance to particular features of the Christian Church, or to matters common to all Christian Churches, which have been largely insisted on by a certain school of modern writers. Thus the Buddhist institutions for leading a common life, under somewhat severe rule, have often been compared with Christian monasticism.

The mendicants or monks, who copied Buddha's life more exactly, and who aimed at a higher standard than that of ordinary Buddhists, were under rules of exceptional severity. Like the Buddha, they were ordered to wear rags dug up from a cemetery and covered only by a yellow linen overcoat. None might possess more than three sets of such rags. They were to live only on what could be procured by begging alms from house to house, in a wooden box. While doing this they were to preserve the strictest silence: nothing might induce them to break it. A single meal in the day was all that they might take. They were never to eat after noon on any pretence. Except in the rainy season, when they might live in the viharas or convents, they were to live and sleep in the woods or open fields: they might come into the towns

only to beg. They were to cover themselves at night, if at all, with the leaves of trees; to rest, if at all, against the trunks of trees; to go to sleep sitting, and not lying down; not to rearrange their carpet, when it had once been spread. Once a month every Buddhist mendicant was to repair to a cemetery, to meditate amongst the dead on the instability of human things. He was to expel covetousness by renouncing property: he was to crush sensuality by leading a single life. He was to keep before him as the six transcendental virtues, which, in Buddhist language, "carry man over to the other bank," almsgiving, poverty, patience, courage, contemplation, knowledge of the law. This was the general rule of life for men—the bhikshus, or Buddhist mendicants. Sakya-Mouni's aunt and nurse became the founder of a similar method of life for women. When these mendicants lived together, others who wished to live according to the stricter Buddhist life, and yet not to bind themselves to all the obligations of a religious order, were associated with the regular mendicants as a kind of lay brethren. At this moment the soil of China and Thibet is covered with Buddhist convents of this description.

Profound as are differences both in the object and spirit of these institutions and those in Christendom, the great general resemblance is undeniable; and the same observation has been extended to the details of the Buddhist ritual and hierarchy. When MM. Huc

and Gabet, the Roman Catholic missionaries, published their well-known *Travels in Thibet*, they described all the Buddhist ceremonials in the usual language of the Roman Catholic Church. "It is impossible," says the Abbé Huc, "not to be struck with the resemblance to Catholicism." He then enumerates a long list of correspondences in matters of order and ceremonial: he describes the proceedings of the Lamas in the regular terms of the Roman Pontifical. He had, in fact, no other language at command to describe what he saw: but his book was stupidly put upon the Index, as if it were intended to imply that Roman Catholicism and Buddhism were substantially identical. In the same manner a comparison has been drawn between the Grand Lama of Thibet and the Pope, and between such Buddhist monarchs on the other side of the Himalayas as Asoka and his successors and the Constantinopolitan Emperors, or the Czars of Russia, or Henry VIII. and the Tudor and Stuart sovereigns of this country, in their relations to particular sections of the Christian Church. Such resemblances are due, not to any essential correspondence between the Buddhist and Christian religions, but to the general laws which govern the self-presentation and activities of any religion in this human world, at particular social epochs, and under certain recurring circumstances.

Again, to take points which concern all Christians

equally, the Buddhist missionaries are undeniably more like missionaries of the Christian Church than are the propagators of any other known religion.

Contrast them with the apostles of Islam. Moham-medanism too aimed at the conversion of the world, but its instrument was, not preaching, but the sword. The followers of the Prophet, encouraged to believe that Paradise, peopled with beautiful houris, would open its gates immediately to the Moslem who had died fighting for the sacred cause, swept through Western Asia and Northern Africa, with the cry, "Death or Conversion!" The Buddhist prince, Mahinda, who converted Ceylon, addressed himself to his work just as any quiet Christian missionary would do at the present day: he succeeded in getting the government to allow him a fair hearing, and he made the most of it. So far as its method went, the conversion of Ceylon was in no way distinguishable from St. Paul's labours at Philippi and Thessalonica; it was a work of moral and spiritual influence, as distinct from violence or compulsion of any kind. Again, the process whereby the Buddhist Councils formulated their common stock of doctrines, and defined what, for want of a better name, we must call the canon of their sacred books, cannot but remind us of what took place in the early centuries of Christendom. Any one who will read such accessible and entirely trustworthy manuals as Professor Westcott's *History of the Canon*

of the *New Testament*, or his *Bible in the Church*, will see what I mean, in observing how, gradually, and in some cases only after very grave hesitation, the Church of Christ too arrived at the recognition of her Scriptures. These admissions, I must repeat, prove nothing as to the worth of the teaching of the Buddhist missionary, or as to the truths of the Buddhist sacred books, still less as to the human origin or authority of Christian Doctrine or the Christian Scriptures. The undeniable resemblance is to be referred to the operation of those general laws which govern the expression and propagation of religious thought, whatever be its real claims upon our faith and obedience.

(β) A second reflection which must be made is this. No religion, however false, is so false as not to contain some elements of truth. The fetich-worship of the lowest savage affirms this great truth, that man must look out of, beyond, above himself, for a worthy object of his intellectual and moral aspirations. And the truth which is imbedded in a false religion is its element of permanency and strength: the false creed lives on and spreads, if it does live and spread, because, amid all the falsehood which it teaches, it teaches also truth, and so justifies itself to the deepest instincts of the human conscience. The conscience cannot generally analyse the food which is offered to the soul at the moment of reception, and it is coaxed into receiv-

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ing an immense conglomerate of truths and lies, by its profound affinity for the truths which make the lies tolerable, or even welcome. Who shall deny, for instance, the splendour of the truth upon which Mohammedanism traded, and which it still puts forward, the truth of the Divine Unity? "There is no God but God:" it is a glorious confession, if only it could be divorced from the ambition of an impostor, and from a theory of heaven which would make the Divine Presence the scene of a sensual revel.

Now, the strength, the invigorating element of truth in Buddhism, lies especially in its moral teaching. On this head there is, so far as I am aware, no room for controversy. "Taken by itself," says Professor Max Müller, "the moral code of Buddhism is one of the most perfect that the world has ever known."¹ "A collection might be made from the precepts of a single Buddhist work, *The Footsteps of the Law*," says Mr. Spence Hardy, the Wesleyan missionary, "which in the purity of its ethics could hardly be equalled in any other heathen author."² "It is difficult," says M. Laboulaye, "to comprehend how men not assisted by Revelation could have soared so high and approached so near the truth."³ This language may appear to be exaggerated, and it certainly cannot be adopted without some reserve; but let us consider what the moral teaching of Buddhism is. Every

¹ *Chips from a German Workshop*, i. p. 221.

² *Ib.*

³ *Ib.*

Buddhist, be his home in Ceylon, in Burmah, in China, in Thibet, or in Cashmere, has to be well acquainted with the four Sublime Truths, as they are called. They form his creed. These truths are (1) the existence of pain, in some shape or other, in every human life. This truth is the base of the rest. (2) The cause of pain. This is traced to passion, to indulged desire. (3) The remedy for pain: man, according to Buddhism, may escape from it in the Nirvâna, the highest object and reward of his efforts. (4) The means of arriving at this cessation of pain, the method which leads to the Nirvâna. In this method there are eight parts or stages: each is a condition of ultimate success. First, the Buddhist must have a right belief. Next, he must have a good, clear, unhesitating judgment. Thirdly—and here we reach what I am anxious to insist upon—he must be perfectly veracious: he must hate a lie. Fourthly, in all that he does he must aim at a pure and straightforward object which shall govern his actions throughout. Fifthly, he must engage in no profession to gain his livelihood that is tainted by moral laxity, *i.e.* practically he ought to be a Buddhist mendicant. Sixthly, he must give his mind to understanding the precepts of the law. Seventhly, he must keep an honest memory of all his past actions. Lastly, he must meditate earnestly, if he would raise his understanding from this lower world to the quiet of the Nirvâna.

It was in understanding these truths, say the Buddhists, that Sakya-Mouni became the Buddha, after six years of austerity and meditation at Uruvelâ. They formed the main feature in his popular teaching during the later years of his life. They were the weapon which he wielded with most effect against the Brahmins. They occupied the attention, almost to the exclusion of other matter, of the first Buddhist synod. They are the subject of the earliest treatises or Sutras. A stanza, which is often found under the statues of Buddha, and which all Buddhists know by heart, embodies them. Besides these there were five dissuasive precepts, of universal obligation: Not to kill; not to steal; not to be unchaste; not to lie; and not to get drunk. Five other precepts run thus: Take no food between meals; keep away from dances and theatres; use no perfumes; do not sleep in a magnificent high bed; do not take any gold or silver. The elements of the highest wisdom, when the Buddhist has only one step to make to enter Nirvâna, are said to be: (1) Reflection; (2) Study; (3) Perseverance; (4) Inward joy; (5) Confidence; (6) Entire self-control; (7) Indifference to the opinion of the world.

We shall best understand the working of the Buddhist morality by one or two stories, selected from the Sutras by Saint-Hilaire, which, whatever their exact historical value, have an indisputable beauty, as teaching what Buddhism was meant to

be in actual life, and what it probably has been in very many lives.

The first shows us the undeniable charity and courage of the Buddhist missionary. Powma was a self-made man, the son of a slave who, by application to business, had realised a large fortune. He fell in with some merchants of Sravasti during one of his voyages, and was much attracted by their prayers and hymns. Sakya-Mouni was working there at the time; Powma was presented to him; and Sakya-Mouni instructed the neophyte in the law. Powma then became anxious to convert to the Buddhist faith a neighbouring tribe of peculiar ferocity, but Sakya-Mouni endeavoured to dissuade him. "The men of Sronaparanta," said he, "where thou wouldest fix thy abode, are violent, cruel, insolent, ferocious. What wilt thou think, O Powma, when these men address thee in insolent and abusive language, as they will?"

"If," replied Powma, "the men of Sronaparanta abuse me to my face in gross and insolent language, I shall think to myself, Certainly these men of Sronaparanta are sweet-tempered and excellent people, since they neither beat me with their hands nor wound me with stones."

"But," replied Sakya-Mouni, "if the men of Sronaparanta should beat thee with their hands, or wound thee with stones, what wouldest thou think of it?"

"I should think," said he, "that they are good and

gentle, because they at least do not use sticks or swords."

"But if they did use sticks or swords, what then?"

"Then," replied Powma, "I should say to myself still, These men are good and gentle, since they do not take my life."

"But if they do take thy life," rejoined Sakya-Mouni, "what then?"

"I shall reflect," said Powma, "that the men of Sronaparanta are good and gentle, for delivering me so easily from this body, which is filled with corruption."

"Good, O Powma," replied Sakya-Mouni. "Thou mayest, if thou wilt, fix thy abode in the country of the Sronaparantakas. Go then; and as thou art delivered from pain, save others: as thou hast gained the further bank, help others over: as thou art consoled, be the consolation of others: as thou hast reached the true Nirvâna, make others reach it too."

Powma obeyed; and by his dauntless resignation he won the hearts of the savages, and taught them the Buddhist religion and law.

A second narrative may exhibit the power of bearing wrong and forgiving its authors, which the Buddhist morality insisted on.

Kunâla was the son of Asoka, the Indian monarch of the third century before Christ, whose conversion

to Buddhism did so much for its extension in India and beyond. Kunâla was governor of a province, and was extremely popular among his subjects. One day an order arrived from the capital that Kunâla's eyes were to be put out; the order was signed with the royal signet. The fact was that Rishya-Rakshita, one of the wives of Asoka, had tempted Kunâla's virtue; and when he resisted her wicked advances, she had determined to punish him, and had possessed herself surreptitiously of the royal signet, after the fashion of Jezebel in the matter of Naboth, in order to do so. When the order arrived, the people at first refused to carry it out. But the young prince, recognising his father's seal, said that it would be right to submit. A deformed leper was the only person who could be found to carry out the cruel mandate.

"It was to prepare me for this misery," said Kunâla, while they were waiting, "that the wise men who knew the truth said to me, So all this world perishes; no man remains what he was for ever. Those virtuous friends, those high-minded sages, who are free from all passions, told me then the truth. My eyes, too, are perishable: when I think of this, I do not tremble at the threatened pain. Let my eyes, then, be taken out or left, just as the king likes. They have already done me all the service they can: they have taught me that all here perishes." Then addressing himself to the executioner, "Now," said

he, "take out one eye, and give it me in my hand."

In spite of the cries of the multitude the man carried out the order; and the young prince, taking his one eye in his hand, said, "Why dost thou, O vile lump of flesh, no longer see forms around thee, as just now? How foolish are they who can so attach themselves to thee, as to say, It is my very self."

Then the second eye was cut out. Kunâla cried, "The eyes of the flesh have been taken out, but I have gained the vision of wisdom. If the king forsakes me, I become the son of the King of the Law (he means Buddha). If I have fallen from the royal dignity which brings in its train so much pain and disappointment, I have acquired the sovereignty of the law, which destroys pain and grief."

Some time afterwards Kunâla was told that he had been the victim of Rishya-Rakshita's intrigue. "May she long enjoy happiness, life, and power," he cried, "for having done me in this way so great a service." He wandered about India, led by the hand of his young wife, and at last they reached the palace of Asoka. Asoka was shocked at what had happened, and especially at the wickedness of Rishya-Rakshita, whom he determined to put to death. Kunâla begged for her life, and saved it. He assured his father that he believed his misfortune to be a just

punishment for some crime which he had committed in a previous state of existence.

Other histories of the same kind might be quoted from the Sutras,—one in particular which illustrates the union of chastity and charity to which some Buddhists attained. It describes a young merchant's resistance to the advances of a very famous courtesan who at last committed a murder, and was punished by having all her limbs cut off and being left to die in a cemetery. Then, and not till then, the young man visited her; and she, in her agony, expressed her surprise at seeing him. He had come, he said, not to reproach, but, if he could, to console her: now she might know, as he did, how all on earth is perishing; he would help her to learn something of the law of Buddha before she died. She died, it is added, consoled and in peace.

It is plain that a system which could teach a morality like this had in it an element of enormous power. The human conscience could not but love these sublime and gentle virtues—this heroism, this patience, this purity, this charity, this forgivingness, this wealth of passive endurance. There is nothing like it in Mohammedanism, which, whatever it may teach in other ways, consecrates on a great scale impurity and cruelty. There is nothing like it even in the old Roman Stoicism, which in some ways approached the revealed morality of the Church so

remarkably: the Stoic was always at bottom hard and proud; he never reached the humility, the sublime patience of the Buddhist. The religion of Jesus Christ, and it alone, equals and surpasses this side of the Buddhist morality. But we can hardly wonder at the success of the Buddhist missionaries. They had quite truth enough in their mouths and in their hands to account for it; and as men listened to the precepts and to the histories of the Sutras, they did not inquire very closely into what there was beyond. If its doctrine of the Unity of God made the fortune of Islam, the beauty of its passive morality made that of the religion of Buddha.

II.

What is it, then, which differentiates Christianity, which makes it impossible for us Christians to admit that Christianity and Buddhism are two different forms of some one universal religion of humanity? In order to answer this we must ask three questions, which are the measure of the value of any religion. Religion being the bond which unites the human soul to God, it always must be considered, in the case of a particular religion, (1) What does it say about God? (2) What does it say about man? (3) What about the person and authority of its originator?

(a) Let us begin with the last. What does Buddhism say about the person of its founder? The hymns in the Lalita-vistâra, which probably belongs to the period of the second Buddhist Council—in its Sanskrit form—give some answer to this. One hymn celebrates his praises as the embodiment of purity and of science. Another reminds him of his promises of protection towards his servants. A third asks him to free his servants from the empire of passion and the empire of pain. A fourth describes him, in his earlier transformations, as a king, a Brahmin, an antelope, a parrot: the Buddha had sought the good of all. Many of the hymns in this Sutra are connected with particular events in Sakya-Mouni's life; they celebrate the despair of his wife at his leaving Kapilavatthu; his answer to the king of Magadha, and the like. But they chiefly express the overflowing gratitude and reverence of his followers for himself. There is a hymn which sings of him as the guide of men and the joy of the world. There is one which addresses him as the learned physician of men, as more helpful to man than either Indra or Brahma. Another hymn describes the melody of his voice, the glory of his footsteps which made the very dust radiant. Another celebrates his victory over evil spirits; another his triumph over the temptation to ambition; another his resistance to the temptation of earthly beauty. In another, he is entreated

to arise from his indifference ; to instruct men and make them share his glory. In another he is saluted, all but adored, by the purest of the pure, by the spirits of the dead, by the devas or gods, and by men, as the teacher of the Law.

No doubt, when St. Clement of Alexandria spoke of Buddha as being treated as a god, he must have formed his opinion from the report of such hymns as these, which were then four or five centuries old. Nothing less than Buddha's divinity would have been implied, if the writers of these hymns had ever known what God is from such a revelation as that of Sinai.

When St. Paul speaks of Jesus Christ as of Providence, Who guides his steps and controls his actions, we know what he must mean, even if he did not, as he does, go so far as to say that our holy Redeemer is "over all, God blessed for ever."¹ When St. John pictures the adoration of the Lamb slain and immaculate in the midst of the Throne of Heaven,² no words would be too severe for the implied blasphemy in the eyes of believers in the Unity of God, unless the doctrine that the Son is of One Substance with the Father was literally true. But the very idea of God was unknown to these Indian hymn-writers. The Buddhist hymn-writers had the later Brahmin hymns running in their heads, which ascribed the

¹ Rom. ix. 5.

² Rev. v. 6-13.

highest Divine attributes with equal readiness and profusion to all the inferior spirits and deities of the Indian Pantheon; so that when Buddha is said to have been adored by those who are themselves adored, nothing is intended beyond an exuberant compliment, such as might be lavished with entire Brahminical propriety on a very exalted teacher.

Saint-Hilaire appears to be strictly accurate in saying that Sakya-Mouni has never been deified by his followers. His relics have been worshipped; his image (the hand raised as if in teaching, the legs crossed) is everywhere in his temples; but he himself is gone the way of ecstatic annihilation: he has achieved the triumph of escaping from existence. He is invoked in passionate apostrophes, which, upon serious thought, cannot be supposed to reach his ear. Certainly, his entry upon life is described in terms by the *Lalita-vistâra* which might befit the conception of a Divine Incarnation. But the idea of his pre-existence was not peculiar to himself or to Buddhist theology; the notion of transmigration belonged to the common stock of Indian ideas; and the enrichment of this fundamental conception by the presumed debate in the Indian Olympus as to the time, the continent, the country, and the family in which the Buddha should be born twelve years before his birth in no way implies belief in his being more than an exalted man. He is a social reformer with philoso-

phical tendencies, who has taught some beautiful things about morality, and a great deal of nonsense on other subjects; he never says anything to imply that he is himself more than a religious discoverer, who has, in his own opinion, succeeded, and who is entitled to the veneration of his followers. He dies like every one else; and it is difficult to say whether his presumed blessedness is not the exact measure of his felt impotence to aid his worshippers.

Contrast this with the claims of Jesus Christ. He does not, like Buddha, arrive at His Gospel after long struggles: He brings it from heaven. He does not tell men to deliver themselves from pain and death. He says, "I am the Resurrection and the Life; whosoever believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."¹ He does not leave them to guess, in after ages, what is His own eternal relation to the Uncreated Being. He says, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."² "I and the Father are One."³

(β) What does Buddhism say of man? what does it offer to do for man? It echoes much which belongs to the common stock of Indian thought, which it accepted from Brahminism without revision. "The idea of transmigration," says Professor Max Müller, "the belief in the continuing effects of our good and bad actions, extending from our former to our present

¹ St. John xi. 25.

² *Ib.* xiv. 9.

³ *Ib.* x. 30.

and from our present to our future lives, the sense that life is a dream or a burden, the admission of the uselessness of religious observances after the attainment of the highest knowledge, all these belong, so to say, to the national philosophy of India. We meet with these ideas everywhere, in the poetry, the philosophy, the religion of the Hindus.”¹

Buddhism, then, in common with Brahminism, regards existence as miserable; and here, up to a certain point, these Indian religions are in accord with Christianity. “The whole creation,” says St. Paul, “groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now; and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies.”² The Apostle is in agreement with Buddha as to the fact, but not as to either its importance or its remedy. In the Buddhist Sutras, physical pain is the leading feature of human misery; in the New Testament, moral error is its leading feature. Man’s first business here is to escape from physical misery. Buddhism makes no sharp distinction between physical and moral evil—the disease of the body and the disease of the soul; for in truth the deeper distinction of soul and body, with which we Christians are so familiar, is, says a great scholar, really unknown to the Sutras. Cer-

¹ *Chips from a German Workshop*, i. p. 227.

² Rom. viii. 22, 23.

tainly, Buddhism affirms the great law everywhere traceable in man's natural conscience, and so nobly recognised in the earliest poetry and thought of Greece, that man's physical misery is a consequence of moral wrong. But of the sense of sin as the contradiction of God, and the disfigurement and ruin of the personal spirit in man, of the sense of sin as Christians understand it;—of the chasm which it opens between the sinner and the Perfect Being, of the resulting need of a propitiation for the past, and of reconciliation and supernatural strength for the future—Buddhism knows nothing. Man may work out his own deliverance from pain by a prescribed discipline; his moral faults have not destroyed his moral power. The public confessions of faults which Sakya-Mouni encouraged, and which became at one time a regular institution in parts of India, do not imply a sense of guilt, or more than an effort to arrive at virtue through the acknowledgment of failure. And thus while Christians look forward to relief from pain in heaven only as an incidental result of a far greater blessing—enfranchisement from sin through union with God in and through His Blessed Son,—Buddhism would escape from sin and pain by a single effort,—from pain anyhow,—by the self-achieved annihilation of the Nirvâna.

What is the Nirvâna? Buddha himself would seem to have left the exact meaning of this—the

goal of all his efforts—in obscurity; and it has had to be interpreted by his followers. But there is no doubt about the meaning of the word: it means blowing out, extinction. Certainly, many of the modern Buddhists, especially in the south of Asia, limit this extinction to old age, disease, and death. Nirvâna for them is only the eternal youth and health and life of heaven. But Saint-Hilaire appears to have shown that, at any rate originally, and generally now, Nirvâna means the extinction of being. Unless this be granted, it is impossible to explain the contrast which was felt to exist between Buddhism and Brahminism, which last proposed an escape from pain through absorption into the Primal Being. It is, indeed, a thought of unspeakable misery that millions of human beings should have lived and died in the hope, not of immortality, but of annihilation. Yet the fact is beyond question: the Buddhist's doctrine of human nature amounts to saying that the best thing it can do is to cease to be.

Need I contrast this with the teaching of our own Apostle in the Epistle to the Romans? He fixes his eye, not on the universality of pain but on the universality of sin, which has fatally disturbed man's right relationship to God;¹—man is not flattered by Christianity; but, when humbled, he is not left to his own resources. By a true union with Christ, re-

¹ Rom. iii. 21.

ceived by the hand of faith, the lost relationship is restored; and "there is no condemnation for them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."¹ The mighty invigorating force of hope is thus given to fallen humanity; none need perish, says the Gospel, though all have fallen; and he may rise who will.

(γ) What does Buddhism say about God? In the sense in which we use that word—nothing, absolutely nothing. Of the One Self-Existent Being, Whose power, wisdom, and goodness know no bounds, Whose sanctity, providence, mercy, and justice are the constant objects of a Christian's thought, Buddhism is utterly ignorant. It does not recognise Him so far as to deny His existence: it ignores Him. This unreal world, in which Buddha sees nothing which is not perishable and deceptive, does not imply to his apprehension any counter-reality, any Absolute Being as its Creator. Certainly the existing Indian divinities are not repudiated by Buddha. But he owes nothing to them; he owes everything to his own efforts and virtue; and they are merely so much old ornamental furniture which he does not care to get rid of, and handles respectfully. In the Buddhist temples the only objects of veneration are the image of Buddha himself, and the relics of Buddha and others. The stoupas or tumuli which are found about India, such

¹ Rom. viii. 1.

as the Manikyala stoupa in the Punjaub, do but recall the memory and preserve the remains of a great teacher. Humanity is confronted with the placid image, the tranquil self-confidence, the undeniable virtue of Sakya-Mouni; but if man looks higher—above the chair of the human teacher—all is dark and void.

A religion without God! It is a contradiction in terms; and yet the absence of God from Buddhist thought is concealed by the immense mass of religious observances and activities which fill up the foreground. And thus Buddhism is not a religion, properly speaking; it is a philosophy of life, trying to do the work of a religion. Of that virtue which includes and invigorates all other virtues, and whose object is God,—of that tender and sublime passion which sways the soul with imperious control, while it leads it ever onwards and upwards, Buddhism is really ignorant. And this being so, can we wonder at the results of the system upon the vast populations which are brought within its influence, and which attest the splendour of its historical triumph? What are the moral characteristics of China? That easy indifference to life; that light-hearted carelessness as to duty; that timid pusillanimity in presence of threatened pain; that general depression—which is not really relieved by outbursts of levity—depression at having to live in a world where nothing is real—depression at having to pre-

pare for annihilation within the four walls of a sepulchre; that selfishness which is alternately violent and petty; that all-embracing scepticism which leaves nothing really worth thought or effort: much of this is the work of Buddhism. True, Sakya-Mouni did not intend it all, and would have condemned much of it; just as Hegel in modern Germany, whose fundamental thought is probably interpreted most accurately by Strauss, most certainly did not mean to abjure the name of Christian, and to deny the existence of a God, and would have been shocked at the disciple whose dreary scepticism has at last reached these conclusions. But the truth is, teachers pass away, while principles remain. Whatever Sakya-Mouni was and meant, his system contained within itself the forces which would necessarily in the long-run enervate and degrade its adherents. Beautiful as was much of his morality, it was impotent, because, besides being incomplete, it had no base on which to rest. If the living and personal Author, Measure, End of moral truth is ignored, morals cease to be anything but the poetry of a man or of a nation: they soon have nothing to do with practice.

Among the many lessons to be learnt, even from that fragment of this great subject which it has been possible to consider, this only will I venture to recommend to you. The experiences of Eastern Asia in

bygone centuries may not be without their use at the present day to England,—to Europe.

For what do we see around us at the present hour? Two distinct and powerful tendencies. On the one hand an impatience of ancient and primitive Christian doctrines, however attested,—an impatience which readily welcomes any supposed lessening of the authority of Scripture, any chance of mutilating or disusing an ancient Creed. On the other hand, we see an increasing conviction, in all the more thoughtful minds, that without clear moral convictions society must go to pieces; and a consequent anxiety on the part of unbelievers to rest moral truths upon some basis, intuitional or experimental, physical or social, independent of a belief in a Personal God. Depend upon it, gentlemen, that Buddhism here supplies us with a lesson which may save us from many a rude experience. It may be true enough that God reflects His Will sometimes in the deepest instincts of our nature, sometimes in the organic requirements of human society, which, indeed, is not less His work than are the body and soul of man; but unless moral precepts be rested on belief in Him, ay, and let me add, on what He has told us about Himself and His Will, they will not really control conduct and life in the long-run. A society which is losing or which has lost those masculine beliefs, those energetic soul-controlling convictions, which

purify and invigorate the heart and will, cannot recover its vital forces by a talismanic repetition of beautiful moral sentiments or by a picturesque delineation of their practical effect.

To have a faith in the Unseen, clear, definite, strong, is to have the nerve of moral life; to be without such a faith, or to mistake for it some procession of shifting mists, or the ever-changing views of a kaleidoscope, is in the end to forfeit moral life. The energy of a founder of a new system; the enthusiasm of a literary or philosophical school which is feeling its way towards influence and empire, may for a while keep these extreme consequences at bay; but in the long-run the law will operate—ay, irresistibly—in the case whether of a man or of a society. To believe this thoroughly is, in the highest sense of the word, worth a great deal; and if no other conviction should have been left upon your minds by this effort to trace some sides of a vast and deeply interesting subject, the effort will not have been made in vain.

THE LIFE OF ST. PAUL.

I. THE PREPARATION.¹

THERE is little reason, you will feel, for anything in the way of explanation or apology for choosing the Life of St. Paul as the subject for this and the next Lecture. At this season of the year this Apostle might almost seem to preside over the services of the Christian Church, the Epiphany or Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles being more directly identified in history with his enterprise and devotion than with that of any other human being. And in this great building, which stands on a site that has been for some fourteen centuries identified with the love and honour that the Church of Christ has ever felt for one of the first and greatest of her Master's servants, it is impossible not to recognise, if we can recognise them anywhere, the great claims of his life and character upon every student, not merely of the history of Christendom, but of the life and progress of the human race. St. Paul's is a name which occupies

¹ Lecture delivered in St. Paul's Cathedral on Tuesday evening, January 13, 1874.

so commanding a place in the New Testament, and therefore in the teaching of the Church, that it is difficult to dissociate him from the method and tone of an ordinary sermon. Nor would I on any account whatever be supposed to imply either that the real historical Paul of Tarsus is a different being from the Apostle who has so high a place in the heart of the Church of Christ, or that a more intimate acquaintance with the reality must in this, as in some cases it must, strip his aureole from the head of the object of our early reverence. It is because with St. Paul the very reverse is so eminently the case that we do well to look at the Apostle's life from a slightly different point of view from that in which it is commonly presented to us, and to attempt to weigh, within very restricted limits, some parts of its moral and historical significance.

Every noble life, every conspicuous career, implies a period of preparation and development, more or less traceable. This is one of the reasons which make biographies always so popular a branch of literature: they enable us not merely to recognise excellence, but to trace it, or attempt to trace it, to its source. Few men have their lives written who have not done something noteworthy: and the interesting question for all of us is how they came to do it; what were the circumstances without, what the impulses and lines of thought within, that led them on step by step until they reached the point

of triumph or of excellence. Some of us perhaps have been reading lately a book which in more ways than one will have recalled, across however great an interval, the memory of St. Paul,—I mean Miss Yonge's life of the devoted missionary Bishop Patteson. A great deal of that book relates only what might be found in very ordinary lives, in the lives of some among ourselves. But everything, even the most trivial details of home, and school, and college, and friendships, and correspondence, is more or less interesting, because everything is from the first regarded as leading up to a life-work of singular devotion, crowned by a singularly noble death. In all such cases the catastrophe or the victory reflects a splendour not its own upon each trivial detail that may have preceded it.

Here it would be logically natural to say what the Apostle of the Gentiles was in himself, to Christendom, and to humanity. But there are obvious reasons for addressing ourselves to our work historically, and I must therefore assume you to be more or less familiar with much on which I shall hereafter insist somewhat at length, while I ask, How did St. Paul come to be what he was at the beginning of his apostolical or missionary life?

There are, as a rule, three elements, I might almost say three periods, to be distinguished in the preparatory life of every man who achieves much or anything considerable in life. There is the raw

material of personal character, developed, moulded, invigorated by education—in short, the man's original outfit for life. There is, secondly, some new influence or influences, which give, or may give, a decisive turn to hopes and aims,—which raise, or may raise, the whole level of life to a higher atmosphere. Lastly, there is, as a rule, a period in which these two earlier elements are fused and consolidated; a period of reflection, when the true work of life is already more or less clearly in view, and when the intellect is being cleared and the will braced until the decisive moment arrives for undertaking it. I do not say that these periods can always be made out with chronological precision, or that they always preserve, so to speak, their due perspectives; but in their elements they will always be found to exist wherever a man's life embodies anything morally remarkable. Let us see how they apply to the case before us, the case of Saul of Tarsus.

I.

Education is the work partly of teachers, partly, in some cases mainly, of circumstances. We shall best appreciate what it must have done for St. Paul if we briefly remind ourselves of the history of his early years,—of his life up to the date of the death of St. Stephen.

It is difficult to fix the year of St. Paul's birth; he was a young man when St. Stephen was martyred.

He would probably have been born in the later years of Herod, or early in the short reign of Archelaus, when, under the sway of the Emperor Augustus, the Roman world was at peace, and when the wickedness of the imperial despotism had not yet fully developed itself. The pirates who had infested the eastern Mediterranean had been sternly suppressed; the Jewish people was still enjoying everywhere ample toleration under the Roman laws; and a Jewish family like St. Paul's, settled at Tarsus in Cilicia, would have been in sufficiently comfortable circumstances. Tarsus was a "free city" of the Empire,—that is to say, it was governed by its own magistrates, and was exempted from the annoyance of a Roman garrison; but it was not a "colony" like Philippi in Macedonia, and the freedom of Rome, which St. Paul says he had at his birth, would probably have been earned by some services rendered by his father during the civil wars to some one of the contending parties. It is at least probable, from the expression, "an Hebrew of the Hebrews," which St. Paul applied to himself, that his parents were originally emigrants from Palestine. We know that they were of the tribe of Benjamin, and strict members of the Pharisee sect. Probably his father was engaged in the Mediterranean trade. To his mother—it is a remarkable circumstance—there is not one reference in his writings; he had a sister, whose son lived in later years at Jerusalem, and

who would have been his playmate at Tarsus. The Talmud says that a father's duty towards his boy is "to circumcise him, to teach him the law, and to teach him a trade." We know from the Epistle to the Philippians that the first of these precepts was accurately complied with on the eighth day after the child's birth. The second would probably have been obeyed by sending the boy, not to one of the Greek schools in which Tarsus abounded, but to a Jewish school attached to the synagogue, where after the age of five he would have learnt the Hebrew Scriptures, at ten years those floating maxims of the great Jewish doctors which were afterwards collected in the Mishnah, so as at thirteen to become what was called a "subject of the Precept," after a ceremony which was a kind of shadow of Christian Confirmation. The third requirement was complied with by setting him to make tents out of the hair-cloth which was supplied by the goats which abounded on the slopes of the neighbouring mountains of the Taurus, and which was a chief article in the trade of the port—tents which to this day are, it is said, used largely by the peasantry of south-eastern Asia Minor during the harvest-time.

At or soon after thirteen Saul would have been sent from home, probably in a trading vessel bound from the port of Tarsus for Cæsarea, on his way to Jerusalem. Already as a boy the Holy City must have possessed for him an interest surpassing that

which could be raised by any other place on earth. Every great festival would have been followed by the return of one or more of his countrymen to Tarsus, full of the inspiration of the sacred sites, of the splendour of the new Temple, of the fame and learning of the great doctors of the law. Especially he would have heard much of the two rival schools of Hillel and Shammai; of which the former exalted tradition above the letter of the law, while the latter preferred the law to tradition when they clashed. Of these, the school of Hillel was the more influential; and when St. Paul was a boy and a young man its greatest ornament was Gamaliel. Gamaliel, we are told in the Acts, was "had in reputation of all the people," he was evidently one of those men whose candour, wisdom, and consistent elevation of character would have secured him influence in any society or age of the world. He was named by his countrymen the "Beauty of the Law;" and the Talmud declares that since his death the "glory of the law" has ceased. It was at the feet of Gamaliel, St. Paul tells us, that he was brought up. This expression exactly recalls to us the manner in which the Rabbinical "assemblies of the wise," as they were termed, were held. The teacher sat on a raised platform; the pupils on low seats, or on the floor beneath. At these meetings some passage of the Hebrew Law was taken as a thesis; it was then

paraphrased in the current Syro-Chaldee dialect; various explanations and aphorisms and opinions were quoted; the teacher said what he had to say, and then he was cross-questioned by his hearers. And although, especially in the school of Hillel, there must have been a large mass of legendary and even absurd matter in these lectures and conferences, such as we may still read in the Talmud, there must also have been much of the highest doctrinal and moral value,—integral elements of Divine Revelation,—read, marked, learnt, and inwardly digested during those long and earnest discussions. This, at any rate, was the educational process by which Paul of Tarsus was “taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers.” There side by side with Onkelos, also a pupil of Gamaliel and subsequently the famous author of the Targum, which bears his name, he would have learnt all that the highest minds of his day had to say about the creed of his fathers; and if, looking back from the riper experience of later life, he would himself have said that in those years a veil was upon his heart, this profound spiritual blindness would not at all have interfered with the intellectual value of this part of his education. The culture of the mind, we all know, is one thing, the growth of the soul is another. A modern University abounds in men of the highest mental culture who make, and would wish to make, no sort of claim to being religious men; but

their intellectual vigour is not therefore stunted or impaired. Paul, indeed, was religious, although in a mistaken way; and his first creed, with all its shortcomings, was the main instrument of his mental education.

At this period of St. Paul's life we are to a certain extent in the region of conjecture; but it is scarcely doubtful that he would have returned to Tarsus in the prime of manhood before he reappeared in Jerusalem as a member of the synagogue which was connected with or maintained by the Jews of Cilicia. This visit would have completed his acquaintance with the language, and to a certain limited extent with the literature of Greece. The commercial and educated classes in Tarsus, like similar classes everywhere on the seaboard of the Levant, would then certainly have spoken Greek; and as a little boy, Paul, whenever he got out of the narrow circle of his family and of the persons whom he met on Sabbaths at the synagogue, — whenever he played or entered into conversation on the wharves which lined the banks of the Cydnus, would have had to speak it too. His later use of the language, although never quite detached from Jewish idioms and forms of thought, is, upon the whole, that of a man who had used it from childhood; and his use of the Greek poets, of metaphors which a Greek would understand, and in some places of distinctly Greek modes of argument, in not a few places, of

abstract terms on which Greek thought had conferred their meaning and their power, shows that his early education, if mainly rabbinical, was by no means exclusively so. It would seem to be at least probable, that, to omit any other conjectures, he had read portions of the Republic of Plato. Of the three classes of metaphors which are commonly used by him in his later writings,—the architectural, the agricultural, and the theatrical,—the boyish memories of Tarsus probably supplied the material. He had there gazed, with a curiosity which does not repeat itself in later life, upon temples, some of them in the process of construction, which he never entered; they supplied his language about the “edification” of the Christian Church. He had watched the cultivation of the rich meadow-land at the base of the Taurus. Was he not thinking of this when he wrote, “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase”? Above all, he had heard much of the Greek games—he may have witnessed some local sports which imitated the world-famed originals—games which he describes with such vivid appreciation when writing to the Corinthians. If we except one expression in the Epistle to the Colossians, which seems to refer to the destruction of the piratical strongholds in Cilicia by the Roman forces some years before, his military metaphors, like the famous passage in the Epistle to the Ephesians, are due to his contact with Roman rather than with

Greek life—to the rude experiences of Philippi, of Jerusalem, of Cæsarea, of the first imprisonment at Rome. But at Tarsus the Greek literature and society did, if not its best, yet certainly much for him. That gifted and extraordinary race, which was to the ancient world even more than France has hitherto been to Europe—the type and mistress of its outward civilisation—must be understood in that age by any man who had great duties in the future towards the world, towards humanity. At this time in his life, too, St. Paul would probably have become familiar with that large section of the Jews of the Dispersion whose centre was Alexandria, who in everything but religion were nearly Greeks, and whose religion was taking more and more of the Greek dress every day. The great Alexandrian version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, as it is called,—which the Apostle so often quotes, while yet he treats it so freely,—would have been already familiar to him; and the philosophical writer Philo-Judæus, whose efforts to establish harmonious relations between the Old Testament revelation and the Platonic philosophy have had such large results for the highest good and, it must be added, for considerable evil upon the history of religious belief, would have been often in his hands, although as yet he little knew that such vast consequences were to result from the study.

This education was moulding and developing a

character which, not to dwell here on its subordinate features, may be described by one single word—intensity. There was much besides,—sensitiveness, impetuosity, courage, independence. But in all that he did, Paul of Tarsus, before his conversion, as well as after it, threw his whole energy, whether of thought or resolution, into his work. And, as might be expected in a character of this mould, objects of thought and aims of action took their place in his soul according to the real, and not according to any fictitious, order of precedence. The central problems of thought and faith, the ultimate and supreme aims of life, disengaged themselves from all that was merely accessory and subordinate, and were pursued with a concentration of purpose which carried all before it. We may be sure that this was the case, so far as was possible in such a subject-matter, when the young student was still grappling with the accumulated traditions of Rabbinism: we know that it was so when, in the ripeness of his early manhood, the young rabbi returned to the chief scene of his education to take part in a struggle whose issue would form the turning-point of his career.

How mysterious is the thought that there are now living in places, and with names unknown to us, some who will hereafter profoundly influence at least some of our lives. True this is of all human beings: of Paul of Tarsus it was true in a sense which perhaps

never has been repeated. Did he ever, we ask naturally, during his student life, come into contact with One Who was to exert so great an influence on his later career? They must have been at the same festivals; they must often have gazed on the same buildings, the same faces; the opportunity of seeing the Prophet of Nazareth, as He was called, must have often presented itself. Yet there is no proof, no intimation, that they ever met, as man meets man, on the surface of this planet. "The knowledge of Christ after the flesh,"¹ of which mention is made in an Epistle, refers to no personal experience of St. Paul's, but to a mistaken mood of feeling in his Corinthian readers. The question, "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?"² refers to that sight which made St. Paul the peer of Peter and of John, but which occurred after the Ascension. His first known contact with Christianity and with Christ was that of a determined foe.

When Paul of Tarsus reappeared at Jerusalem, not long before St. Stephen's martyrdom, he was standing, as it were, on the frontier of two worlds, the Jewish or Semitic on the one side, and the Greek on the other. He was probably among the opponents of St. Stephen in the Cilician synagogue; and, notwithstanding his earnestness and accomplishments, he was "not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit with

¹ 2 Cor. v. 16.

² 1 Cor. ix. 1.

which Stephen spake." He was checked by the sense of a stronger power than any he could wield: there was something that could do more in and for the human soul than even the learned dialectics of Gamaliel. He must have witnessed the arrest before the Sanhedrim, and have listened to, probably he reported from memory, the great apology in which the martyr justifies the spiritual worship of the Church by a review of the whole past of Jewish history; and for the rest, we have his own bitter self-accusing words of a later date, "When the blood of Thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him."¹

The fact was that the death of Stephen was, in Paul's eyes, a logical consequence of his Jewish creed, and he was not the man to shrink from it. He too, as he witnessed the violence of the brutal mob, the upturned face of the martyr (it was an angel gaze into the depths of heaven), and then stood by outside the eastern gate, at a spot certainly not far from the scene of the Great Agony, and heard the thuds of the falling stones which one after another were crushing out the life of the man who had beaten him in argument, he must have had, we think, some human sympathy with the object of the Sanhedrim's vengeance. We know that there was an undercurrent of

¹ Acts xxii. 20.

such sympathy, but it might have been silenced or crushed out for ever, as completely as was the passing remorse with which the eye of his murdered master is said for a moment to have filled even such a soul as Cromwell's when it followed him from the canvas of Vandyck. For the present a tempest of logically directed passion swept over the mind of Paul, and silenced or buried all else. The death of St. Stephen was followed by a general and sharp persecution of the Christians. The Roman procurator was probably absent,—if he was not glad of the opportunity of showing his profound contempt for the theological disputes of an Eastern province; so the Sanhedrim and the people had their way. The Sanhedrim was mainly composed of leading Sadducees, a sect which, believing little about the next world, naturally made the most of this, and whose leading members, generally persons of considerable eminence as rulers, were among the foremost personages of the hierarchy. These men knew well how to encourage, for political and worldly ends, the sectarian passions whose motives they regarded with entire contempt; but for the moment the passions of the ignorant people and the policy of these highly-placed sceptics practically coincided. It is at least doubtful whether Paul was actually a member of the Sanhedrim (a single expression has perhaps been overstrained to support the inference): yet he was certainly acting under its sanction and

authority. Although this dread tribunal had been deprived of its old power of life and death, it seems at this period to have exercised it anarchically, and other martyrdoms followed that of Stephen. Paul can have had little enough in common with the high priest under whose commission he was acting; for the moment, as may often be witnessed, sceptical politicians and sincere fanatics were making common cause against what they agreed to consider the new superstition. In many a synagogue Christians were arrested, scourged, compelled publicly to curse the Name of Jesus: women especially, it is noted more than once, were the objects of the violence of the persecution. At length the work was done, as it seemed, effectually. The little community was broken up and dispersed, and the Sanhedrim, which claimed to exercise jurisdiction over a large part of the Jews of the Dispersion, turned its eyes upon the Church which had grown up in the important city of Damascus. That had better be crushed out too; and if the work was to be done, who would do it better than the young Pharisee, whose accomplishments were notorious, and whose unflinching devotion to the synagogue had been proved by his activity as a persecutor? Paul was appointed a special commissioner to destroy the Church of Christ in Damascus, and he left Jerusalem on this errand accordingly.

II.

It was while he was on this journey that the new influence which was to make him what he is to Christendom was brought to bear upon his life.

There are many men for whom the phenomena of the spiritual world simply do not exist. It is impossible within the compass of this lecture to make any attempt to demonstrate their reality; it is necessary to content ourselves with observing that they can be shown to be just as real as the facts and laws of what we call nature. In both spheres we are in the region of mystery; we know just as little of the nature of matter as we know of the nature of spirit; we only touch what we call matter from without, we know not what it is in itself. If we cannot deny, with some philosophers, any reality at all to matter, we are at least safe in saying that spirit is at least as real, and that the world of spiritual experiences is as true objectively—that is, whether we recognise its existence or not—as is the world of matter. Grace with its operations is as much a substantial certainty as the law of gravitation; and the facts which burst on the consciousness of Paul during that eventful journey are philosophically just as much entitled to respectful consideration as the last eclipse which was observed and registered at Greenwich.

Paul had nearly completed his journey,—some six weary days it was at the least from Jerusalem to Damascus. He had traversed the burning plains and uplands of Gaulonitis and Ituræa, and was now in the beautiful valley watered by the streams of the Abana and the Pharpar, about a mile and a half, it seems probable, from Damascus. Behind him was the great dome of Mount Hermon, capped with snow; on his right the Hauran; on his left the spurs of Anti-Libanus; before him the city which contained his destined victims, its white buildings just rising above the trees and gardens which lined his road. It is one of the choicest spots on the surface of our globe, that approach to Damascus, beautiful in itself, more beautiful from its sharp contrast to the arid desert which encircles it. It is, as has been said, a very wilderness of gardens, in which flowers and fruit are intertwined in careless profusion, in which the prune, the apricot, the olive, festooned by the vine, grow on this side and on that in rich luxuriance, while everywhere the channels that are distributed for the purposes of irrigation over the plain cool the air with the clear fresh streams that run from the base of Anti-Libanus, and maintain this wealth of vegetation under that burning sun. Its situation alone explains the fact that Damascus is the oldest of known cities; and that while Tyre, Babylon, Palmyra, each of these more modern than itself, have long since

perished utterly, Damascus is still a place of beauty, and even of importance.

It was at noon, when all is hushed in those southern climes, even to the very birds upon the trees, that the event occurred which turned the whole current of the life of Saul of Tarsus. Suddenly there was a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun, shining round about Paul and them that journeyed with him. The stupefied companions of the persecutor fell to the ground; they only rose to hear that a voice was being uttered which they could not understand. The vision was not meant for them, and although the narrative makes it certain that it was not merely something internal to the soul or mind of St. Paul, but, on the contrary, a strictly independent or, as we should say, objective phenomenon, it was not intended for them, and they saw and heard only enough to know that it was in progress. Paul heard what they did not hear, he saw what they did not see. He heard in the tones of that voice, in the words of that language, which had fallen on the ears of Peter and John, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? it is hard for thee to kick against the goads." He had, it is plain, felt the pleading of St. Stephen before the Sanhedrim, the death of St. Stephen outside the city walls, the constant, energetic, though sternly repressed, working of his own conscience reviewing the facts of his own career; they

were a cause of much secret distress to him, and here there was an evidence from without, confirming what had been already whispered within. The religion which he had argued against, fought against, persecuted, was true. It made people in every way inferior to himself somehow, yet unmistakably, his moral superiors—that he had already felt; and now here was the countersign of that feeling revealed from the very clouds of heaven. He asked submissively what he was to do, and he was told to arise and go into the city, and there it would be told him what he was ordained to do. The burning light of the vision had blinded him; and he entered Damascus, not at the head of his cavalcade, bent on schemes of violence and persecution, but led by the hand, as if he were himself a prisoner, to the house of Judas. There for three days he fasted and prayed—he passed seventy-two hours in silence—in darkness alone with God.

The shock of the occurrence passed; its meaning, its consequences, its ineffaceable consequences, remained and unfolded themselves before his mind's eye. The world was another world to him, life was for him another order of existence. He had given his will, his inmost self, to the Being Who spoke to him from heaven. The strength and secret of his new life was this: that he henceforth belonged not to himself; he had abandoned himself without reserve to a perfectly Holy Will. That was the

determining fact of his new life. In the train of that act of self-surrender all else followed. The old had passed away, all things had become new. He was restored to sight at the entrance of Ananias—a humble minister of Christ in Damascus—and was received into the Church by the sacrament of Baptism.

The conversion of St. Paul was the subject of one of the most celebrated pieces of apologetic literature which appeared in England during the last century. The Lord Lyttelton of that day had felt the force of the Deistic objections to Christianity which were so eagerly urged by a large and cultivated school of writers, and he would seem to have recovered his faith mainly by concentrating his attention upon the significance of St. Paul's conversion. We are now concerned certainly less with the evidential force of this event than with its real character; but its real character does undoubtedly invest it with a high evidential value.

It cannot be explained by the temperament or character of the Apostle. He was not a visionary or a person of weak intellect; his whole conduct and the arguments which he employs prove that he was by nature a critic and dialectician, quick at detecting objections, not merely in the case of an opponent, but in his own, and inclined by mental temperament to see to the bottom of such objections before laying them aside. Had he been of the facile and impres-

sible temper which is assumed by the older Deists, and in a slight reconstruction of their arguments by M. Renan, he might have been expected to have given at least one further proof of it, in an opposite or reactionary direction, at one of the many opportunities which presented themselves in his later life. But there is nothing afterwards in the way of change; the converted Paul ceased once for all to be a Jew, in his conduct, his feelings, his inclinations, his prejudices. If his conversion was not what it is represented in the Scripture narrative, the natural explanation of it is at least as difficult as the supernatural. The mental conditions which will explain the vision in the heavens above the brightness of the sun, the conversation with a heavenly Being, the guidance by the hand into Damascus, the blindness, the instruction, the recovery of sight, the total change of thought, feeling, conviction, purpose which followed, would amount to a psychological miracle at least as striking as that which really took place.

Nor can the conversion be explained by the supposition that the account was forged. What motive had St. Paul for inventing it? Was it some private pique or annoyance with the Jews that led him to change his religious profession, and to account for the change in this kind of way? But there is no trace of any personal feeling of this kind; it would have been a sin against natural feeling, since the Jewish people

had singled Paul out for a place of confidence and honour; and as a matter of fact, when the Jews were persecuting him to death, he expresses, in more ways than one, his love for his countrymen. He deploras their blindness; he excuses their conduct so far as he can; and even if in one place he paints it in dark colours, he would, he says, gladly be accursed, were it possible, in their place. Was it the spirit of sensitive independence, which will sometimes lead men to assert their own importance at the cost of their party or their principles? That, again, is inconsistent with his earnest and consistent advocacy of the duty of subjection to existing authorities, in terms and to a degree which has exposed him to fierce criticism from the advocates of social and political change. Was it, then, a refined self-interest? Did the young Jew see in the rising sect a prospect of bettering himself? But Christianity was being persecuted, as it seemed, to the very verge of actual extermination: it had been crushed out by the established hierarchy in Jerusalem itself; it was doomed to destruction, every intelligent Jew would have thought, as well by the might of the forces brought against it as by its intrinsic absurdity. It had nothing to offer in the way of social eminence or literary attraction; it was, as yet, in the main, the religion of the very poor and of the very illiterate. On the contrary, the young Pharisee had, if any man, brilliant prospects before him if he remained

loyal to the Synagogue: the reputation of his great master, his own learning and acuteness, his great practical ability, would have commanded success. If his object was really a selfish one, no man ever made a greater or a more stupid mistake to all appearance; for no Jew could have anticipated for a convert to Christianity, within a few years of the Crucifixion, such a reputation as that which surrounds the name of St. Paul. Yet, at the same time, there is no reason to suppose that the power which effected this immense change in the purpose and life of Saul of Tarsus operated irresistibly upon his intellect and his will. When he tells Agrippa, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision," he implies that he was perfectly free to disobey. There is no such thing as irresistible grace in the moral world: if there were, man in receiving it would exchange his freedom as a moral agent for the passive obedience of a vegetable to the law of its kind. Paul might have persuaded himself that the vision was an hallucination; that his own brain had formulated the words of Jesus; that the blindness was solely due to physical causes; that the scruples about the blood of Stephen and the martyrs were of the nature of a foolish superstition; and when the shock was over he would have carried out the purpose which brought him to Damascus, and have entered the synagogues to arrest a fresh batch of victims for the Sanhedrim in Jerusalem. If he did

not do this, it was because he was looking out for truth, and disposed to make the most of it when it came. Many a man in his circumstances would have acted otherwise. St. Paul could say, "By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace which was showered upon me was not in vain."

In this case of St. Paul's, the new influence which remoulded his life belonged to a sphere which is above nature. But a kindred influence, scarcely, if at all, less powerful in its results, may be exerted by persons or causes which are strictly within our range of observation. The character of a friend, a startling occurrence, a new book, may form the frontier line between the past and a future which has little in common with it; and, it must be remembered, susceptibility to such influences is not a mark of feminine weakness. On the contrary, the most masculine natures, if true to the higher promptings of conscience and the higher sides of existence, are peculiarly open to them; and, even when they fall far short of involving a "translation from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God," they still form that decisive turn in the affairs of men, which taken at the tide leads on to excellence.

III.

It was natural that in the first fervour of conversion St. Paul should wish to make others sharers in his illumination and his joy. He appeared without

delay in the synagogues of Damascus. His appearance had been expected as that of the accomplished Pharisee who was commissioned by the high priest Theophilus to exterminate the Christian heresy in the ancient Syrian capital. He would bring the most recent and ripest learning of Jerusalem to confute the nascent error; he would use force if necessary—with prudence, but with unflinching determination. What must have been the blank astonishment of his old co-religionists when he “straightway preached, in the synagogues, that Jesus was the Son of God”! What must have been their indignation when the first stupor of surprise had passed! And how great must have been—we know that it was great—the thankful wonder of the trembling Christians when their declared enemy thus publicly, and at the imminent peril of his life, owned himself a disciple and preacher of the Faith which he had so recently persecuted to the death! The higher interests of human life are liable to surprises, but few that ever happened can have rivalled this!

It would seem that this first effort at missionary work was of brief duration. It was an anachronism, dictated by profound spiritual impulse, but at variance with the orderly development of his life. After a great change of conviction, nature, as well as something higher than nature, tells us that a long period of retirement and silence is fitting, if not necessary.

The three days in the house of Judas were not enough in which to sound the heights and depths of newly recognised truth, or the strength and weakness of the soul which was to own and to proclaim it. They were to be followed by three years—I must not enter upon the chronological reasons for insisting on the literal value of the expression—three years passed in the deserts of Arabia. It has indeed been thought that this retirement was dictated by a wish to preach the Gospel to the wandering Bedouin tribes or to the settled Arabs at Petra. And there is no doubt that Arabia was among the Ancients a very wide and inclusive geographical term. It might have included Damascus itself. It might have even taken in regions far to the north, extending to the very borders of Cilicia. But these are less usual uses of the word: nor can it be supposed that emphasis would have been laid on this retirement if all that had been meant had been a journey of a few miles into the desert beyond the walls of Damascus. Something may be said for the supposition of a retreat to Petra, the ancient capital of Edom, which had its synagogue in Jerusalem; but the probabilities are that under the profound and awful inspiration of the hour, Paul sought to tread in the footsteps of Moses and of Elijah at the base of Sinai. There is a reference to the dialect of the district in the Epistle to the Galatians¹ which

¹ Gal. iv. 25.

makes this at least probable for other than spiritual reasons; the spiritual attractions of such a course must have been to a man with his character and antecedents not less than overwhelming. There, where the Jewish Law had been given, he was led to ask what it really meant; what were its sanctions; what its obligations; what were the limits of its moral capacity; what the criterion of its weakness. There he must have felt the inspiration of a life like Elijah's, the great representative of a persecuted religious minority, the preacher of unpopular truth against vulgar but intolerant error. Would not the still small voice which had spoken to the Prophet,—or rather, did it not,—speak again and again, whispering those deep truths which are missed or forgotten or lost amid the bustle of active life, to the new convert? They were precious years, depend upon it, for a man whose whole later life was to be passed in action.

The value of such retirement, if circumstances admit of it or suggest it, before entering on the decisive work of life, can hardly be exaggerated. Many a young man whose education is complete, as the phrase goes, and who knows, or thinks that he knows, what to do for himself or for his fellow-creatures, is often painfully disappointed when his plans for immediate exertion suddenly break down, and he has to remain for a while in comparative obscurity and inac-

tion. It seems to him to be a loss of time, with little or nothing to redeem the disadvantage; he is wasting, he says, his best years in idleness. He may, of course, so act as to make that phrase justifiable; but it need be nothing of the kind. A prudent no less than a religious man will thankfully avail himself of such an opportunity for consolidating his acquirements, for reviewing the bearings of his governing convictions, for estimating more accurately the resources at his disposal, for extending or contracting his plans—at least for reconsidering them: a religious man will, above all else, seize such an opportunity for testing and strengthening his motives, and cultivating an increased intimacy with those means and sources of effective strength which he will need so much hereafter. St. Paul, we may be sure, used the opportunity. It is not improbable that the argument of his Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians, although provoked by later circumstances arising in the bosom of the Christian Church, was the fruit of his meditation in the silence of the desert. In any case, in those dreary wastes his spirit would have been free from the pre-occupations of sense; free to measure the import and exigency of his recent vision and change; free to review the past years which had been a gain to him, but which henceforth, so far as their proper aim was concerned, he accounted loss; free to prepare for the life of work and suffering whose dim outlines may

already have sketched themselves before his eyes, in a strength which would alone sustain him.

There we must leave him this evening. The preparation for that life is complete: we have to consider in another lecture what were its results to the Church and to humanity.

THE LIFE OF ST. PAUL.

II. THE MISSIONARY—THE CHURCH RULER— THE MARTYR.¹

A LIFE like that of St. Paul yields sufficient material for at least ten lectures such as those which we can give in this Cathedral ; and I therefore can make no pretension whatever to deal with its main features exhaustively in one. It suggests too, as some at least of my hearers will know, questions of great extent and intricacy, which have created little less than entire literatures in the course of their discussion, and upon some of which no very positive opinion can be arrived at. If these are passed by, or only glanced at incidentally, or referred to as settled in this way or in that, without giving further reasons, it cannot be helped. All that can be done within such limits as ours is to suggest a few salient points of the general subject ; to furnish the outlines, which may be filled up by further and private study ; above all, to stimulate interest, if it might be, in a great character—a great Saint and Doctor—who on so many grounds is so entitled to command it.

¹ Lecture delivered in St. Paul's Cathedral on Tuesday evening, January 20, 1874.

The life of man is made up of action and of endurance,—of the efforts which he puts forth, of the pain, discomfort, inconvenience which he undergoes. And human life is noble and fruitful in the ratio in which it is laid out in vigorous action, consecrated by a noble aim; and in suffering, deliberately submitted to or embraced from a generous motive. Nor do lives passed in speculative thought or in religious contemplation really lie outside this division. Such thought is, or ought to be, an energetic, although undemonstrative, variety of action; the thinker who is not dreaming, the contemplative whose soul is really engaged upon the unseen realities which interest him, is hard at work with the organ which beyond all others is capable of immense exertion and of distressing fatigue.

To pass life in an aimless indolence, to shrink from endurance as well as from exertion, to exist but in a state of moral coma,—this is really degrading. Life is always and only ennobled by effort and by suffering. It is necessary to admit this—as an axiom, as a truth fairly beyond discussion—if we are to understand St. Paul at all.

I.

St. Paul's life became what it was under the influence of an overpowering conviction. He was certain

that he was in possession of truth, of which mankind were almost universally ignorant, and which it was of the utmost practical importance for them to know. This certainty rested upon two or three converging lines of evidence: the report of his moral sense or conscience as to the Christian character, the evidence of his bodily as well as of his spiritual senses on the road to Damascus, and the remarkable correspondence between the conclusion thus reached and the fair meaning of the sacred documents which he had from his earliest years regarded as of Divine authority. This certainty came to him at that decisive moment of his life which we partly discussed last Tuesday; but the practical conclusion, from the nature of the case, only gradually shaped itself. To use his own words, he was a debtor to the human race, "to the Greeks and to the barbarians;" he owed it a share in that truth which he had, he felt, no right to monopolise. How should he, how did he, discharge the obligation?

St. Paul's missionary life extended altogether over a period of nearly thirty years. For in one sense he was a missionary from his conversion. His early efforts in Damascus provoked the hostility of the Jews; and not long after his return from Arabia he was obliged to escape for his life from an officer of king Aretas, who in these unsettled times was commanding in Damascus, and acting apparently under

Jewish influence. He fled to Jerusalem. To visit Peter was, he says, a leading motive for going there. The Christians in Jerusalem were naturally afraid of a person who had been so conspicuous a persecutor, and their confidence was only won by the good offices of Barnabas, who assured them of the facts and reality of St. Paul's conversion and of his work for the true Faith in Damascus. He lived for a fortnight on terms of intimacy with St. Peter and St. James,—our Lord's first cousin, and the first Bishop of Jerusalem; and some part of this time he spent in arguments with the Hellenistic or Alexandrian Jews, for which his education peculiarly fitted him. He thus excited the greatest hostility, and was obliged to take flight by way of Cæsarea to his birthplace Tarsus. Of his life at Tarsus during the next four years we know nothing, except that it must have been by no means a period of inactivity. Making his father's home his headquarters, he seems to have preached in the city and its neighbourhood, as well as on the Syrian coast on the opposite side of the bay; and several of the dangers and trials to which he refers in his second letter to the Corinthians probably belong to this period, especially his three shipwrecks and his being publicly scourged by the Jewish and Roman authorities. In the year 44, Barnabas, who was working at Antioch, came to Tarsus to secure the co-operation of St. Paul. The Church at Antioch had been founded

eight years before by refugees from Jerusalem, who were flying from the persecution which Paul himself had directed; it had contained from the first a number of Gentile converts, and it was to superintend this new state of things that Barnabas had been sent, with apostolic authority, from Jerusalem. Barnabas and Paul worked together for a year, in teaching the heathen and organising the Church, and at the end of this period they took a considerable sum of money to Jerusalem to meet the wants of the poor Christians in that city during the famine which occurred at the time of Herod Agrippa's death. They returned to Antioch with St. Mark, a nephew of St. Barnabas, and the Church of Antioch rapidly became, for the time, the most central spot in Christendom. The political and commercial importance of this city, as well as its position, made it the natural starting-point for a great scheme of Church extension, while the presence of a great many Gentile converts irresistibly suggested it. If the Gospel had come to Antioch—to men of heathen birth in Antioch—could it be meant to stop there? Was it not, by its very terms, a message of health and deliverance to the whole human race, and was not Antioch, with its half-Jewish half-Gentile Church, the natural scene for originating such an enterprise? So it was that the Church of Antioch was taught, by the silent movement of the Holy Spirit within men's minds, to make a great effort for the faith in the Gentile

world, and to give her greatest teachers to the work. The decisive conviction came while the Liturgy or Holy Communion—such is the apparent force of the original word¹—was being celebrated, and the two friends with the nephew of Barnabas set forth on their mission.

Up to this time St. Paul had worked as a subordinate—a kind of curate—to Barnabas. Like all really great men, he was profoundly indifferent to any mere questions of personal or professional precedence, provided that sacred principles were safe and that true work was done. He left Antioch, still the second to Barnabas; but after the conversion of Sergius Paulus, the proconsul at Cyprus, the author of the Acts of the Apostles no longer writes Barnabas and Saul, but Paul and Barnabas. Not only is the order of the names inverted, but the Jewish name, Saul, is dropped, and the Roman name, Paulus, which the apostle had probably possessed from his birth, was exclusively adopted, with a view, no doubt, to conciliating Gentile prejudices.

It is at this point that St. Paul's missionary life, in its complete form, begins. Between his leaving Antioch in the year 48, and his arrest at Jerusalem in the summer of the year 58, he achieved what are popularly known as his three missionary journeys. They do not bear traces of any fixed plan. What plan there

¹ Acts xiii. 2.

was was disturbed sometimes by circumstances ; sometimes it was set aside by a higher Guidance under which the Apostle acted. They rather remind us—to draw an illustration from a very different field of exertion—of those efforts which the discovery of the New World, and the hope of finding the imagined El Dorado, provoked at the hands of English and Spanish adventurers alike in the days of Philip and Elizabeth. It was the spirit of enterprise, only in St. Paul's case it was consecrated by a purely unselfish and noble motive ; and enterprise is necessarily governed by circumstances, and can never be mapped out very systematically. St. Paul's journeys were in their way like the expeditions of Sir Walter Raleigh in theirs ;—the creations of a noble impulse which must be doing something—raids, conducted on no very obvious plan, upon the dark domains of heathendom.

And yet, looking back upon these journeys, we may see that they do bear a certain relation to each other. The first was tentative ; it was what military men would call a reconnaissance of the forces of the heathen enemy. It extended no further than to the northern side of that line of mountains upon which Paul had gazed in his childish days : it began with a great success ; it well-nigh closed in the Apostle's martyrdom. In Cyprus he converts the Roman pro-consul, and punishes the magician Elymas. Crossing to the mainland, he makes a great impression at

Antioch in Pisidia, which provokes an outbreak of Jewish hostility; at Iconium the scenes of Antioch are repeated; at Lystra and Derbe he is among uncivilised Pagans, who are ready to pay him Divine honours in one mood of feeling and to stone him to death in another. Jewish hostility was at the bottom of the incident at Lystra; the Apostle turned homeward by the way he came, making as sure of his work as he could by leaving presbyters in every town, and at last embarked at Attalia direct for the Syrian Antioch.

This was in 49, and the next year, 50, was marked by the visit to the Apostolic Council at Jerusalem. In 51 St. Paul set out on his second missionary circuit. He would not take St. Barnabas' nephew, who had shown a want of apostolic resolution, and this led to a separation from Barnabas himself. Silas, or Silvanus, took the vacant place. This second journey is on the whole the most important; it is certainly the richest in incident and the boldest in its range. Again the missionaries started from Antioch. They passed through Syria and Cilicia. They revisited the old scenes of Derbe and Lystra, where Timothy was circumcised and taken into the Apostle's company. The Galatian mission followed, of which we know little from the Acts, but much from the Letter to the Galatian churches. St. Paul was detained in the district by some bodily ailment, whether weakness of the eyes, or, as is on the whole more probable, epilepsy;

but this did not prevent his working as an Evangelist, and he probably founded at least three churches in the three chief towns of this central district of Asia Minor, amid an amount of exuberant enthusiasm characteristic of a people of Celtic origin, and soon to be followed by a serious reaction. He then intended to work on the western coast of Asia Minor, and subsequently on the north-east coast in Bithynia. He was prevented by Divine intimations, and finally was guided by a vision to cross from Troas into Macedonia. This decisive moment marked the entrance of the Gospel into Europe. Accompanied by St. Luke, who joined him at Troas, he crossed, touching at Samothrace, to Neapolis. Then follow a series of incidents to which the greatest prominence is assigned in the narrative of the Acts, and with which we are all familiar. The Roman colony Philippi is the scene of the conversion of Lydia, the exorcism of the slave-girl, the scourging and imprisonment of the Apostles, the conversion of the jailer. At the purely Greek city of Thessalonica, the successful preaching on three Sabbaths is followed by an attack on the house of Jason, and his arrest, the Apostles escaping by night. At Berea the resident Jews are capable of a more generous bearing, and there are many converts, and yet the Apostle had to be privately removed to secure his safety. At Athens he is face to face with the great traditions of the past of Greece, with the scorn

and yet the curiosity of Epicureans and Stoics, with an anxious idolatry that would leave no possible object of superstition unvenerated. Corinth, famous even in Pagan days for its gross impurity, is his residence for a year and a half; it witnesses the conversion of Crispus the ruler of the synagogue, the formal secession from the synagogue to the house of Justus, the failure of the Jewish appeal to Gallio; and then follows, in the spring of 54, his return, by way of Cenchrea and Ephesus, to Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost.

St. Paul's third journey is clearly intended to supplement and to confirm the work of his second. He had not yet laboured at Ephesus, the capital of Asia Minor, and one of the great centres of the ancient world. Ephesus, to which a famous temple and commercial interests drew together men of many races and tongues, had a natural charm for the heart of an Apostle. He spent three years in Ephesus, so great was his sense of its importance to the future of the Faith. The progress of his work was marked by his secession from the synagogue to the lecture-room of Tyrannus, then by his triumph over the professors of magic, lastly by the great riot organised by the discontented silversmiths, who made shrines for the great temple of Artemis or Diana, and were afraid of losing their business. The other noteworthy point in this circuit is his visit to Corinth, which, as we know from his two Epistles to that Church (one of

them written from Ephesus, the other while he was travelling through Macedonia), urgently required his presence. On his way he passed the frontiers of Illyricum. He remained in Corinth three months, wrote his Epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians, and in the spring of 58 returned, by way of Philippi and Miletus. At Miletus he took leave of the presbyters of Ephesus, and with presentiments of coming trouble strongly upon him, he reached Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost.

The remaining ten years of his life, from 58 to 68, were still, although in a less active sense, missionary. True, he still works on, but more in chains. He is less in synagogues, more in law-courts, in guard-houses, in dungeons. His arrest at Jerusalem in the summer of 58 was followed by his long imprisonment at Cæsarea; he was only sent to Rome by Festus in the late autumn of 60, and reached it in the spring of 61. But he misses no opportunity of doing what can yet be done. Speaking before Felix or Agrippa, he turns a legal argument into a religious apology. Whether on board the vessel which is carrying him to Rome, or when shipwrecked at Malta, or when chained to a soldier near the Prætorian camp in Rome, he is still a missionary. His two years' imprisonment at Rome is devoted to work—first among his own countrymen, then among the Gentiles; and on his acquittal he seems to have spent four years, first in

Macedonia and Asia Minor; then probably a year or a year and a half in Spain; then again he is in the East,—at Ephesus and at Nicopolis. Even in his second imprisonment, when his work was all but done, he could influence such persons as Linus, who was to be Bishop of Rome; or Pudens, the son of a senator; or Claudia, a British princess. But, speaking broadly, the last ten years of his life were spent more in administering and governing the Church than in enlarging her frontiers. Before, however, we pass to this side of his work, it is natural to ask the question, What were the qualities which made St. Paul the first of missionaries?

In answering this question, I do not forget his apostolic prerogatives. He could work miracles, and command an inspiration, which might well seem to place him outside and above the category of all ordinary Christian missionaries. And yet his success, we may be bold to say, was largely due to qualities which any who tread in his steps, at however great a distance, may share.

There are, among others, four points to be remarked here.

(1) St. Paul never for one moment forgets that he is uttering a Divine Message,—that he is preaching a Creed, not commenting on a philosophy. His Creed was, indeed, as he told the Corinthians, the truest philosophy; but then it came, he believed, out of no

human brain, but from the Mind and Heart of God. Accordingly, he proclaims it, simply, unhesitatingly, uncompromisingly, as a man would do who had no doubt about its inherent power and its ultimate success. St. Paul, in fact, was what would now be called a dogmatist. Dogmatism is very unbecoming in those who can appeal only to human authority for what they say, and who ought to know that they may very possibly be mistaken. But a man who believes himself to be charged with a message from God to his fellow-men must be clear, positive, straightforward in his assertions; a dogmatic dress is simply due to the character of what such a man professes to have to say. Men who object to dogmatism in Christian teachers on account of the claim which it implies would smile at the claim to bring a message from heaven in the mouth of a declaimer against dogma. If St. Paul had preached Christianity as if he was half ashamed of its mysteries, and thoroughly afraid of offending Jewish or heathen opinion, he might have got through life more easily, but he would not have made half-a-dozen converts or roused the jealousies of a single synagogue.

(2) St. Paul is disinterested. He sought not what his converts could give him; he sought themselves. And disinterestedness is power, in whatever cause it may be enlisted. The Corinthians and the Galatians knew perfectly well that their great teacher had

nothing to get by them; they knew in their better moments that he had given them all that was worth having in life and in death.

(3) But side by side with this sincere and unaffected accent of certainty, and this lofty independence of motive, St. Paul is capable of the greatest consideration for the difficulties and prejudices of those whom he is anxious to win. Strong men, like strong systems, can afford to be generous; while the uncertain or the timid are almost necessarily suspicious and unsympathetic. Their own hold on truth they instinctively feel is so precarious that they cannot venture to take liberties; they will be suspected of vacillation or disloyalty if they appear to enter into the difficulties of others. St. Paul knew that no weight of human authority, and no ingenuity or strength of human argument, could touch a truth which he had received, neither of man nor by man, but from God and His Divine Son. But for this very reason he could become all things to all men, that he might by all means win some. To the Jews he became as a Jew, that he might save the Jews. Nothing in his whole life illustrates this quality of the tenderness of strength which St. Paul so remarkably possessed more strikingly than his circumcision of Timothy. It was in his second missionary journey, when he was carrying with him, and distributing to the Gentile converts that decree of the Council at Jerusalem

which proclaimed their freedom from the Mosaic law. Timothy's father was a Greek, his mother a Jewish woman; and St. Paul felt that to be accompanied by one who was half a Jew, and who professed the Jewish faith, yet was uncircumcised, would be a cause of great offence in every synagogue he entered. He therefore took and circumcised Timothy. How inconsistent, men might exclaim, how illogical, how wanting in adherence to principle! The real question always is, when principle is and when it is not at stake. Paul could resist the pressure of opinion at Jerusalem when the circumcision of the Gentile Titus was said to be necessary. He could withstand even St. Peter to the face, when deference to narrow Jewish prejudices was compromising the Faith. A man of real principle is not afraid that his generosity will be mistaken, or that, if it is mistaken for the moment, he will in the end be misunderstood.

(4) Once more, St. Paul is eager to recognise the truth which is already admitted by those whom he wishes to convince or convert. When he makes war upon the strongholds of religious error he is not an indiscriminate destroyer. Truth—the truth which is mingled with it—being the strength of all error, the Apostle recognises such truth as truth; he makes the most of it; he shows how, rightly understood, it leads on to the full, uncorrupted, unmutilated truth which he is himself recommending. Thus his method on

reaching a town is always to begin work at the synagogue, because the synagogue furnished him with the premises of his argument,—with people who already believed what ought to lead them on to agreement with himself. He had rights in the synagogue, too, which were not yet formally cancelled, and he made the most of them. In the synagogue he and his hearers were united in a common reverence for the Old Testament Scriptures. Read his sermon in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia as a sample of his method. During the whole of the earlier part of the sermon every Jew present must have followed him entirely. He solemnly acknowledges the God of this people Israel. He traces God's Hand in Israel's history down to the days of David—the great days upon which every Jew looked back with enthusiastic interest. Then he enlarges on David—a name so close to the sympathies of his audience,—and then, at last, he names Jesus, as David's promised Son. He justifies this by referring to the ministry of the Baptist and to the facts of our Lord's life. The rulers who crucified Jesus, he says, did not really know the Jewish prophets, or they would have acted otherwise. The Resurrection of Jesus was the fulfilment of God's promises to the fathers of Israel. It was the God of Israel, then, Who proclaimed true righteousness and forgiveness of sins through Jesus; and the

sermon closes with a warning against unbelief which is carefully conveyed in the familiar language of the Jewish prophets. The effect of such a sermon was to say, "You suppose Christianity to be altogether hostile to the old faith of Israel: on the contrary, Christianity is its legitimate and necessary development; it completes that unveiling of the Divine Mind which the Jewish Law began."

Or take the most modern, as it has been called, of St. Paul's sermons, that which he pronounced from the Areopagus in Athens. Here he does not quote Jewish Scriptures, of which his hearers knew nothing. He had observed, he says, that the Athenians were particularly religious, and that, in order to be quite safe, they even erected an altar to some "Unknown God." He is able, he says, to tell them something about that God. They had heard of One Being Who was the Source and Sustainer of Universal Life. They had been taught to look at human history as an education and discipline for some higher truth not yet mastered. So far, they have gone with the preacher; now he passes the frontier of their sympathies. That all men of all nations were of one blood, or that there was One Who stood in a universal relation to all, Who would judge all, Who had risen from death to attest this His mission—this was beyond them. Still, how skilfully is this further step introduced, how tenderly does the Apostle feel his

way from the admitted to the unknown; and it was, we may be sure, but a sample of his usual method.

Yes! beyond all controversy, Paul the Apostle is the first of Christian missionaries. All the great labourers for the extension of Christ's kingdom in later ages—Boniface and Augustine, Patrick and Columba, Xavier and Martyn—have breathed his enthusiasm, have lived his life, have accepted in varying degrees his methods, have trodden his steps. Peter, indeed, was first at work; Peter, in his own single person, was the rock on whose personal exertions the Church was to be built; Peter laid its foundations. And, as we gather from somewhat dim traditions, the other Apostles of Christ had each their appropriate fields of work; they can have been no common efforts by which the earliest Syrian Churches were founded on or beyond the frontier of the Empire. But as compared with St. Paul's "more abundant labours," everything else in the apostolic age pales and fades away. He it is who is the typical missionary,—the man who, still almost before our very eyes, with truth on his lips, and a burning love of his fellow-men and of his God in his heart, goes forth to win a reluctant world to a mysterious and exacting Creed—to the only Creed which could bring with it the great gifts of peace and righteousness. His example is as energetic as ever, and he has yet work to do before the end.

II.

St. Paul was not only a missionary, who laboured for the extension of Christianity; he was also a great ruler and administrator of the Christian Church. He had to tend, support, guide, govern the churches which sprang into being as he passed on his way. "The care of all the churches"—"that which cometh upon me daily"¹—he represents as the climax of his trials. As an Apostle, he had responsibilities towards the whole Church; there was no restriction of such responsibility to particular cities or districts as was afterwards, *e.g.*, the case with bishops at the close of the Apostolic age. Certainly there was a general arrangement between himself and the three Apostles who were called the "pillars of the Church," that they should work among the Jews and he among the heathen nations; but his own activity on his visits to Jerusalem, and the later labours of St. Peter and St. John in heathen lands, show that this was not understood to interfere with the inherent rights of each member of the Apostolic College.

As a great ruler in the Church, St. Paul had to pronounce decisions on very various questions affecting Christian duty; and as he deals with them we must be struck by the strength and tenderness of that sympathy which was his characteristic gift. The

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 28.

Church of Corinth was divided into parties, one of which made free use of his own name: he remonstrates tenderly but firmly.¹ The Corinthian women were agitated by a discussion as to what sort of head-dress they should wear at public worship: he goes into this seemingly trivial question with the greatest patience, and decides, for very weighty reasons, which he gives, that their heads are to be properly covered.² A Christian is guilty of an odious incest: St. Paul cuts him off from the communion of the Church.³ The man repents: St. Paul orders his restoration to Church-communion.⁴ Might people, it was asked, eat meat which had been offered for the purpose of sacrifice in heathen temples? It entirely depends, St. Paul says, upon whether offence is thereby given to weak Christians or not.⁵ Is it well for Christians to marry again, or to marry at all? St. Paul enters into these questions with the utmost minuteness.⁶ Two Philippian ladies, Euodias and Syntyche, have a private quarrel, while St. Paul is in prison at Rome: he hears of it and sends them a special message, desiring them to make it up.⁷ Onesimus, a converted slave, wishes to return to his master Philemon, whom he had injured and deserted: St. Paul gives him a letter of recommendation, full of the most delicate consideration for Philemon's own feelings and position, as well as for

¹ 1 Cor. i. 10-17.² *Ib.* xi. 5-13.³ *Ib.* v. 1-5.⁴ 2 Cor. ii. 10.⁵ 1 Cor. viii. 1-13.⁶ *Ib.* vii. 1-40.⁷ Phil. iv. 2.

that of his own later convert.¹ The Holy Communion was profaned at Corinth through the proceedings at a love-feast which preceded it: St. Paul uses language of stern severity, and adjourns the discussion of details until his arrival.² The last chapter of the Epistle to the Romans has sometimes been described as a "mere list of names." Its value and interest are of the highest order; it shows how true and discriminating was the Apostle's care even of the individual members of the several flocks that were under his jurisdiction.

Besides these questions of conduct, St. Paul had a great deal of purely ecclesiastical business on his hands. In the Epistles to Timothy and Titus we see him organising the Christian clergy, making rules for their lives and provision for their sustenance, insisting too that their wives are to be persons of ascertained Christian character. He gives Timothy full instructions for creating an order of widows, devoted to charitable works. Indeed, nothing was nearer his heart than making Christian faith useful and fruitful for the purpose of relieving human want and suffering. If the Body was one, he argued, its members had duties towards each other. One of the persistent efforts of his life, again and again referred to, was to raise money among the wealthier Christians of Gentile or Hellenistic origin, in order to support the poverty-stricken populations in and about Jerusalem.

¹ Philem. 10-21.

² 1 Cor. xi. 20-34.

But the duties of the Apostle towards the faith and knowledge of the infant Church were even more exacting than his duties towards its organisation and conduct. Everywhere there were sides of truth to be elucidated or insisted on; misapprehensions to be removed; errors to be rebuked. Each church, it might almost be said, had its particular misapprehension of the Apostle's teaching. At Thessalonica what St. Paul had said about Christ's second coming was exaggerated into a reason for neglecting all ordinary duties. In the Galatian churches some false teachers were persuading the majority that it was necessary to observe the Jewish festivals and fasts, to be circumcised, and in fact to be good Jews as well as or before being good Christians. At Corinth the cardinal doctrine of the Resurrection was denied because of the difficulty of giving an adequate physical explanation of it. At Colossæ a strange mixture of Jewish cabbalistic rules and of Greek modes of thinking had produced a theosophy which, while retaining Christian phraseology, dethroned Christ in the Christian heart. At Ephesus, in the later apostolic age, there must have been some of those attempts to make capital out of Christianity with a view to framing theories about the universe and human life which, under the name of Gnosticism, abounded so largely in the following century, and the germs of which are so plainly discoverable in this. At Alex-

andria—if, as is probable, the Epistle to the Hebrews was addressed, at St. Paul's instance or dictation, to Christians in that city—there was a disposition to fall back altogether to Judaism.

It is in St. Paul's Epistles that we see him at work in this vast field of labour; and if they had not a far higher claim upon our attention, the purely literary interest of these Epistles would be simply exhaustless. They are probably only a portion of the Letters which he actually wrote,—preserved, because instinctively received by the Apostolical Church into the Sacred Canon, while the others have perished. They were written amid the distractions of a life of ceaseless effort and ceaseless struggle. It was in the midst of the mission at Corinth in 52 and 53, where Jewish passion and heathen impurity gave him so much to think about, that he wrote the two Letters to the Thessalonians. It was at the close of his three years' sojourn in Ephesus—so rich in its results, so serious in the proof it had given of the vehemence of popular passions—that he wrote his first Letter to the Corinthians. It was while travelling through Macedonia that he wrote the second Letter to Corinth; at Corinth, in the midst of absorbing preoccupations, he found time to write the great Epistle to the Romans—in itself a great doctrinal treatise—and the brief, vivid remonstrance to the Galatians. A prisoner at Rome, he seized the opportunity of writing not merely the

circular Epistle to the Church of Ephesus and some other churches, but also those to the Colossians and Philemon, and later—the tenderest of all his Epistles—that to the Philippians. He was again engaged in missions when he wrote to Titus and the first time to Timothy; when he wrote his last Letter to Timothy he was in prison, and in full view of the now inevitable end.

While the division of our Bibles into chapters and verses has great practical recommendations, it has also some drawbacks, and they are nowhere more obvious than in reading the Epistles of St. Paul. Unlike St. John, his style does not always lend itself readily to this minute subdivision, and each of his Epistles is, as a rule, like its several paragraphs, an organically connected whole. In order to enjoy, if not to understand him, it is well occasionally, after reminding ourselves of the circumstances under which an Epistle was written, to read it through at a sitting. In this way the force and relative subordination of the arguments, the drift of the incidental observations, the varied play of exhortation, remonstrance, irony, affectionateness, become obvious; we are no longer dealing with disconnected fragments, but with a complete composition which speaks for itself.

Amid all the distractions of our own day, it is almost consolatory to reflect that the Apostolic Church itself was disturbed by serious controversies,

controversies which ran up into offensive personalities, and which were at times, as at Corinth and in Galatia, conducted with much bitterness.

The greatest controversy in which St. Paul was engaged within the Church turned upon the question whether the Jewish observances, circumcision in particular, were necessary. A large party of Christians, whose centre was Jerusalem, who were probably influenced by the current opinions in the school of Shammai, and who made free use of the names of the Apostles Peter, James, and John, maintained that they were. To these men St. Paul's work appeared radically revolutionary: and when they could, they went over, as in Galatia, the ground he had evangelised, insisting that if the Gentile converts would be really good Christians they must be circumcised. St. Paul maintained that while, if a man happened to be circumcised, it did him no harm, to insist upon circumcision as necessary was to deny fundamental Christian truth. For there were two questions of the gravest importance which really were involved in this apparent trifle. (1) Was the Work of Christ, as the Restorer of man to a state of righteousness before God, complete in itself, or was it merely a supplement to the Jewish Creed? Was the system of the Jewish law really able to make men righteous; and if it was, where was the need of the Work of Christ? If this were the case, moreover, was it conceivable that Christ was greater than Moses

and the Prophets, in His Essential Nature? The Judaising theory that the law was still obligatory meant at bottom that Christ's Work was not really complete, and so that His Person was in reality only human. (2) And a second question was, Was Christianity meant to be the religion of mankind, or only of a small subdivision of the Jewish world? Was it, in later language, to be merely national, or was it to be catholic? If Christianity was serious in claiming to be the true, the absolute religion, it could not but also claim to be universal; the two claims, men instinctively felt, went together. In resisting circumcision, then, St. Paul was contending not merely for the Divine dignity of his Master, but for the world-embracing character of the new kingdom, in which there was to be "neither Jew nor Gentile, barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free," but all were to be one.

St. Paul has indeed been said by a distinguished writer against Christianity to have been its real author; to have changed it from a moral sentiment to a dogmatic creed; to have invested the Person of its Founder with a rank which He never would have claimed: and to have given the new religion a world-wide extension which was not at all contemplated by the Prophet of Nazareth. It is instructive to compare this idea of St. Paul's work with that which, proceeding from the same school, represents it as practically

a failure; the Judaizing tendency having, it is contended, successfully asserted itself in the second century, in the ordinances of the Christian Church, and the prevalent conception of the Christian life. The two ideas might be well left to neutralise each other. In fact, St. Paul taught what Christ had taught, only in different terms, and with application to new circumstances. Our Lord had said that in the coming time the Father would be worshipped neither on the Samaritan mountain nor in Jerusalem. He had ruled that man is not defiled by what he eats; He had called Himself Master of the Sabbath,—an unpardonable assumption in Jewish eyes. The Lord made claims upon the love, trust, obedience, reverence of men, which could only be justified if He was what St. Paul taught. He had told his followers to preach among and baptize, not Jews only, but all the nations. St. Paul insisted on these features of our Lord's teaching at a critical point in the history of the Apostolic Church,—that was all. Nor was his work in vain. The greatest minds in Christendom are his direct creations. It is from Paul that Augustine learns the doctrines of grace of which he was so great a master. It is from Paul that Chrysostom imbibes his vivid sense of the range and applicability of Christian morals. It is at the feet of St. Paul, not less than at those of St. John, that Athanasius discerns what was really meant by the Incarnation of the Son of God.

He was caricatured by Marcion; he has been abundantly misrepresented by modern antinomian systems of divinity; but these teachers pass, and are forgotten—St. Paul remains. If, as at the first, there are in his writings not a few “things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest to their destruction,”¹ this does not obscure the glory of the Apostle of the Nations, or render him responsible for inferences from or paraphrases of his words which he would have eagerly disavowed.

III.

In all ages Truth has demanded sacrifices. And no man ever lived who understood better than St. Paul the power and fruitfulness of sacrifice as a means of advancing the cause whether of truth or goodness. He must therefore have seen from the first that his martyrdom lay in the nature of things,—a sufficient presentiment of the end. In the course of discharging his duties he was again and again close to death. He gives the Corinthians a list of the dangers which, even before the year 57, he had had to encounter; and he explains to the Philippians, when imprisoned for the first time in Rome, that he already looked upon death as gain. It would seem that he must have been arrested at Nicopolis late in the autumn of 67, and sent, pro-

¹ 2 St. Peter iii. 16.

bably by the decemvirs, to Rome for trial as soon as it was safe to cross the Adriatic. For since St. Paul's release in 63, events had occurred which made a Christian's position much more insecure. After the great fire in Rome in the summer of 64 the Emperor Nero endeavoured to divert the popular indignation of which he was the object, by turning it upon the Christians. The Pagan historian Tacitus has described the atrocities of this first persecution of the Church,—how some Christians were crucified, some dressed in the skins of wild beasts and hunted to death with dogs, some clothed in dresses of inflammable materials and set on fire at night to illuminate the Imperial gardens. This was three years before the arrest. St. Paul was well out of the way when it happened, but the name of so noted a leader of the Christians would now have been known to the Roman police, and they would have been on the look-out for him. Probably he reached Rome by way of Brundisium early in 68, and his case would have soon come on for trial before the city Prefect, to whom the Emperor delegated causes of this kind: he would have been tried in one of the great basilicas or law-courts which abutted on the Forum. The tragic interest of the Second Epistle to Timothy consists in its belonging to these the closing months of his life. It was written when his case had been brought into court for the first time, and he had been acquitted on the first charge against him,—very

probably that of being concerned in the burning of Rome. He says that on that occasion no one stood by him, whether as patron or as advocate: he had to plead his cause alone. And yet he was not alone; he was more than ever conscious of the strengthening presence of our Lord:—but for this, the isolation of those last months would have been unbearable. Demas had forsaken him for worldly motives: Crescens, for some unnamed reason, had gone into Galatia: even Titus—we cannot suppose through cowardice—had left for Dalmatia: only Luke remained. He longed to see Timothy once more before he died: but he knew that the end was near, and it is impossible to say whether his wish was granted. The second charge against him, probably that of introducing a religion unrecognised by the State, would no doubt have gone against him; but he could die as a Roman citizen. There is no serious critical reason for rejecting the ordinary account of his martyrdom: he was beheaded outside the gate of Rome which looks towards the port at the mouth of the Tiber, and which is now called the Gate of St. Paul. A splendid church, first erected by the Emperor Constantine, and lately rebuilt after the great fire of 1824, marks the neighbourhood, at any rate, of the spot on which Paul of Tarsus passed to receive, as he believed, a crown of righteousness. But his enduring monument at this moment, and to the end of time, will be his great un-

rivalled place in the Sacred Canon, and the gratitude of millions of hearts, to whom he is the incessant minister of a Truth whereby the two deepest longings of the human soul may be satisfied,—the longing to be inwardly righteous, and the longing for a true inward peace.

DANTE AND AQUINAS.¹

PART I.

THE more distinguished Christian writers of post-apostolic date who have contributed to the *Commedia* of Dante, with very varying result, are easily enumerated. The East, so rich in speculative thought, is mainly and oddly represented by the fifth-century author who passes as Dionysius the Areopagite; the West, by St. Augustine, by St. Gregory the Great, by the accomplished and unfortunate Boethius; in a less degree, and in times nearer to Dante, by Isidore of Seville, by the Venerable Bede, by Rabanus Maurus. Among literary and moral influences yet more recent and more powerful were St. Anselm, Peter Lombard, the two St. Victors, and eminently St. Bernard. The opening fourteenth century contributes nothing; we seek in vain for distinct traces of Roger Bacon, of Duns Scotus, of Occam. But in the very foreground of Dante's view are two figures of commanding prominence, each of whom represented a philosophical as well as a religious tendency, each of whom was the typical man of a monastic order in the early days of its fresh, creative and

¹ This Paper was read before the Oxford Dante Society, June 7, 1881.

reforming power. These are the Platonising Franciscan St. Bonaventure, and the Aristotelian Dominican St. Thomas Aquinas. The former might well engage our attention, but our present concern is with the latter.

Thomas Aquinas was born at the Castle of Rocca Secca, which belonged to his family, and in the year 1226. His father was Landulph, Count of Aquino, and Lord of Loreto and Belcastro. His grandfather, Thomas of Aquino, had married Francesca, sister of the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa; his mother was a Norman princess. Whether the alleged predictions of his greatness before his birth were or were not an afterthought begotten of the enthusiasm of his biographer, it is certain that he gave early proof of high mental powers and of commanding character. When five years of age he was sent to the Benedictine School at Monte-Cassino, and his master there passed him on in the course of a year or two to the University of Naples, which had been founded by Frederic II. just eight years before. At Naples, Aquinas remained until 1243, when his studies were approaching completion, and at the age of seventeen he suddenly entered the Order of St. Dominic.

The Dominican Order was just twenty-six years old; its founder—born 1170, died 1221—had been canonised nine years before by Gregory IX.,¹ and its

¹ “l’ amoroso drudo

Della fede cristiana, il santo atleta,

Benigno ai suoi, ed ai nemici crudo.”—*Par.* xii. 55-57.

third General, Raimond de Pennafort, had quite recently, in 1238, given it its final form as a monastic and preaching institute. Still, it was struggling for a position which its earlier success had seemed to bring within its reach; and, as was perhaps almost inevitable, its then rulers have been accused of making undue efforts to enlist in its ranks a young student of noble birth and high intellectual promise. Thomas was hardly the man to do or leave undone anything of this kind under mere pressure from others. His course was probably determined, partly by a desire to escape from the ordinary civil life of Italy, corrupted as it had been by the wars of Frederic II., and partly by the high moral standard of the Order in these days of its first enthusiasm.

“ Io fui degli agni della santa greggia,
Che Domenico mena per cammino,
U' ben s'impingua se non si vaneggia.”¹

But it may also be conjectured that a mind like that of Thomas would have been especially attracted by the great German Dominican, Albrecht von Lauingen, the fame of whose knowledge had reached every University in Europe some years before. Albert was now fifty years of age, and at the height of his reputation. Sixteen years hence he will be forced by Pope Alexander IV. to accept the bishopric of Regens-

¹ *Par.* x. 94-96.

burg, only to resign it after the proved discomforts of a two years' incumbency, and then to spend eighteen years more in his beloved Cologne, before his death in 1280. Dante, it will be remembered, places this great teacher in the fourth heaven—in that wreath of blessed spirits to which Albert's pupil Aquinas also belonged,—a position which would not have been refused him, at any rate by Neander, always equitable in his treatment of the scholastics, if not always profound. "The great mind of Albert," says Neander, "grasped the whole compass of human knowledge as it existed in his time. He abounded in profound, suggestive ideas, with which he fertilised the minds of his contemporaries, and in far-reaching anticipations of truth."¹ The best modern authority on the scholastic philosophy goes still further, and complains of the injustice of posterity in having connected the name of Thomas rather than that of Albert with the distinctive teaching of the Dominican school.²

But whatever the governing attraction, Thomas had made up his mind. His mother wished to see him before he left her for life; but the interview was prevented, probably from a fear lest recent resolutions should yield to the stress of natural feeling. But Thomas's soldier-brothers, who were highly-placed officers in Frederic's army, made themselves masters

¹ *Kirchen-Geschichte*, Periode 5, § 4.

² Hauréau, *De la Philosophie Scholastique*, p. 104.

of his person, and, in the hope of breaking his will, they shut him up in a castle for two years. He spent his confinement in studying the Bible and the Master of the *Sentences*; and his mother, at last convinced that he must follow what he believed to be the Will of God, herself assisted him to escape. The Dominicans sent him first to Paris, on his road to Cologne; and there, under the guidance of Albert, he entered upon the full range of those studies which made him what he has been to Western Christendom. His silent habits gained him, from his German companions, the nickname of the "dumb ox;" but Albert early ventured the famous prediction, "We call him a dumb ox, but he will turn out a teacher whose voice will be heard throughout the whole world." His lectures on the *Categories* and the *Sentences* were received with the greatest enthusiasm. Albert himself was at times rhetorical; he enjoyed the swing and pomp of abounding language: Thomas was rigidly severe and simple, never uttering a word which was not wanted to complete his meaning. It was at this early period of his career—probably in disputes with the more enterprising Franciscans—that Thomas brought his logic to such perfection. None of his contemporaries could propose a dilemma or arrange the terms of a syllogism with such decisive effect. But at the bottom, both of his language and of his logic, was an intellectual caution, which Dante

makes him enforce, after resolving his own doubts, in the 13th Canto of the *Paradiso*:—

“ E questo ti sia sempre piombo ai piedi,
 Per farti mover lento, com' uom lasso ;
 Ed al sì ed al no, che tu non vedi ;
 Chè quegli è tra gli stolti bene abbasso,
 Che senza distinzion afferma o nega,
 Nell' un così come nell' altro passo.”

And then he gives the characteristic reason :—

“ Perch' egl' incontra che più volte piega
 L' opinion corrente in falsa parte,
 E poi l' affetto lo intelletto lega.”¹

Thomas spent his time between Cologne and Paris, lecturing to crowded audiences of applauding students, and, like some modern German professors, being drawn by his reputation away from his studies into the vortex of contemporary politics. The well-known story of his behaviour at the table of Louis IX. belongs to a later period of his life, while he was engaged upon the *Summa*. The king set much store on his opinion respecting affairs of state, and had asked him as well as the prior to dinner. Forgetting where he was, and absorbed in his own world of thought, Thomas suddenly struck with his fist on the royal table, exclaiming, “Then the Manichæans are done for!” The prior, who sat by, was shocked, and seized his arm, and Thomas at once made a profuse apology to the king for his unintended rudeness.

¹ *Par.* xiii. 112-120.

Louis, however, was much edified, and forthwith sent for a scribe, who took down from Thomas's mouth all that had been passing through his mind. But Thomas's aptitude for public affairs did not always help him in other matters. The Dominicans naturally enlisted his services to plead the cause of the Order at Rome; and as the feeling of the University of Paris against the mendicant friars was exceedingly strong, Thomas, notwithstanding his conspicuous accomplishments, was for some time refused his doctor's degree. It was granted him in 1256.

In the eighteen years which followed, and which were spent mainly in Italy, Thomas produced all his great works—the *Summa*, the apologetical work *Contra Gentiles*, the *Commentary on the Sentences*, the *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistles*, and several of the *Opuscula*. Notwithstanding his lectures, his sermons, his relations with public men, his journeys between Paris and the south of Italy, he found time to produce works which are remarkable less for their vast extent¹ than for their compressed thought; and his biographer, William of Thoco, observes with justice, "Unum videtur Deus in dicto doctore dum viveret manifestum ostendisse miraculum, ut tam modico tempore, forte in viginti annis, qui inter magisterium ejus et obitum in vitâ fluxerunt, bis

¹ In the last edition, published at Parma, 1852-1873, they fill twenty-five volumes quarto.

eundo Parisios et in Italiam redeundo, tot potuerit libros per suos scriptores in scriptis redigere.”¹ Like the late Dr. Neale, he could dictate on different subjects to three or four amanuenses at once; and the terseness of his style makes this feat, in any case remarkable, simply astonishing.

It was shortly after his doctorate that Thomas composed his *Summa contra Gentiles*, at the desire of the General of his Order, Raimond de Pennafort, who in his old age was almost exclusively interested in the conversion of the Jews and Moors in Spain. While this work is less generally known, except to divines, than his *Summa Theologiæ*, it is at once, owing to its method, pleasanter reading, and far more likely to interest a modern reader. The nature of his task obliged the writer to fall back upon premises which would be admitted by those who had least in common with his faith; and the sentence, “Unde necesse est ad naturalem rationem recurrere cui omnes assentire coguntur,” which might have been written by Toland or Chubb, is the key-note of the most striking part of this great work. Of course, he is careful to state that there are truths internal to Revelation which Reason could never have reached separately, though she can marshal and do justice to the presumptions which warrant us in receiving Revelation as a whole; and accordingly

¹ C. 4.

while he undertakes to demonstrate, by proofs which appeal to reason, the Being and the Unity of God, he contents himself with showing that “*veritates rationem excedentes*,” such as the doctrine of the Trinity, are not contrary to, though they are above, reason. Dante seems to be thinking of this part of Aquinas’s work when, at the foot of the Hill of Purgatory, Virgil comments on the fact that only Dante’s body casts a shadow:—

“Matto è chi spera che nostra ragione
Possa trascorrer la infinita via,
Che tiene una sustanzia in tre persone.
State contenti, umana gente, al quia;
Chè, se potuto aveste veder tutto,
Mestier non era partorir Maria.”¹

In 1261, Thomas was summoned to Rome by Urban IV., who was anxious to make him a Cardinal. Thomas escaped from this splendid infliction by consenting to be Master of the Palace,—a position which involved less ecclesiastical dignity, while it had the practical advantage of giving him access at pleasure to the Pope’s presence. He had now reached the busiest period of his life, since to his literary labours, which do not seem to have been interrupted or even lessened, was superadded a new mass of work connected with his Order, with the Church at large, and with contemporary politics. Thus we find him assisting at the General Chapter of the Order in 1263,

¹ *Purg.* iii. 34-39; cf. *Purg.* xxxiii. 85.

and engaged in a great effort to re-establish the discipline, the loss of which Dante makes him deplore. Already the flock of St. Dominic was wandering to a great distance from the spirit and institute of its Shepherd:—

“Ma il suo peculio di nuova vivanda
 È fatto ghiotto sì, ch’esser non puote
 Che per diversi salti non si spanda ;
 E quanto le sue pecore remote
 E vagabonde più da esso vanno,
 Più tornano all’ovil di latte vôte.”

In what follows Dante may be thinking of the condition of things half a century later:—

“Ben son di quelle che temono il danno,
 E stringonsi al pastor ; ma son sì poche,
 Che le cappe fornisce poco panno.”¹

Urban IV. died in 1264; but Thomas appears to have been on the same terms of confidence and intimacy with his successor Clement IV. Clement named him to the Archbishopric of Naples; the Bull of his appointment was made out, but, at the last moment, in deference to the distress which Thomas experienced, when resistance was impossible, it was withdrawn. Thomas now gave himself to his most extensive work, the *Summa Theologiæ*; from 1265 until his death in 1274, he devoted all his spare time to it. He had already completed his well-known

¹ *Par.* xi. 124-132.

Catena Aurea,—as to which De Thoco makes the entirely incredible assertion that he dictated all the passages from the Fathers from memory; the office for the new festival of Corpus Christi and the work on the Eastern Church, *Contra errores Græcorum*, both undertaken at the desire of Urban IV.; his interesting book against the Averroistic conception of the soul,¹ and his voluminous commentaries upon Aristotle. In 1266 we find him in Northern Italy; in 1267 he is at Bologna, which, as containing the tomb of St. Dominic (Nicolo Pisano had completed his magnificent work some six years before), was in some sense the centre of the Order. At Bologna he appears, as at Paris and at Rome, as a preacher, and as holding a University Chair; he publishes the first part of the *Summa*; he composes his famous work (if indeed it be his) *De regimine principum*, addressed to Hugh of Lusignan, king of Cyprus; and then, after three years, his superior orders him off again to Paris, to assist at a General Chapter of the Order in 1269. Once more he is a professor in the convent St. Jacques; once more he is the political confidant of St. Louis. Here he writes several of his minor works, never forgetting the *Summa*, the second part of which is published on his return to Bologna in 1271. Upon this it is not too much to say that he was scrambled for

¹ *Declaratio quorundam articulorum contra Græcos, Armenos, Saracenos (ad Cantorem Antiochenum); De Unitate Intellectus contra Averroistas.*

by at least three Universities at once. The General Chapter of the Order finally decided upon sending him to Naples, probably in accordance with his own wishes. After an absence of twenty-eight years he returned to the home of his boyhood; he was received with popular demonstrations, in town and country, as a public character whose transcendent merits and glory as a teacher were now universally recognised. But he hastily buried himself as before in his cloister, to complete his commentary on the Prophets, his explanation of the Epistles and Gospels, several smaller works,—to say nothing of beginning a translation of the works of Aristotle from the Greek text. He had always consulted it in his earlier commentaries, and must often have felt the need of a new translation. Albert of Cologne only knew the Latin rendering of Aristotle which had been distilled from the Arabic: Roger Bacon complained of the miserable versions with which alone he was acquainted. Thomas determined to give to Europe, in a new and trustworthy dress,

“ il Maestro di color che sanno,”¹

as the world, theological no less than lay, then accounted Aristotle; and this without losing sight of the work which had a high place in his heart, the *Summa*, at which, in all leisure moments, he worked unremittingly.

¹ *Inf.* iv. 132.

But the end was now close at hand. At the close of 1273 he had frequent fainting-fits, which his biographer probably mistook, at least in some cases, for spiritual ecstasies. On the 6th of December in that year he finished the 90th Question of the third part of the *Summa*, "de Partibus Pœnitentiæ in generali." His strength was gone; but Gregory x. had convoked a Council to meet at Lyons on the 1st of May in the year following, and desired Thomas to be present, since the relation between the Eastern and Western Churches, on which he had thought and written, was to be specially discussed. Ill as he was, Thomas obeyed. Near Naples he stopped with a married niece, in the castle of Magenza, the Countess Francesca Cecano, and here his illness became aggravated, and his life was even despaired of. But he rallied; and, telling his niece that a monk ought not to die in a secular house, he pushed on northward, in the rude winter weather, towards Lyons. He reached the Cistercian convent of Fossa Nuova in Campagna, and De Thoco describes the enthusiasm with which he was received; but he insisted on being alone, persuaded, as he was, that the end was near. Once more the expiring flame of life flickered upwards; and, fancying that there was a rally, the monks pressed round his dying bed, and begged him to dictate to them a commentary on the book which from its associations with St. Bernard was the favourite of the Cistercians,

the Song of Solomon. Thomas roused himself to the effort; but it was too late. He received the last Sacraments, and passed away on March 7, 1274, in the forty-ninth year of his age.

Among those souls who are placed on the fifth cornice in the *Purgatory*, Dante meets with Hugh Capet, who describes his descendants on the French throne, and in particular says that Charles of Anjou, after putting Conradino to death in 1268, became king of Naples—

“e poi

Ripinse al ciel Tommaso, per ammenda.”¹

Dante here seems to adopt an aggravated version of the story which is mentioned by Villani, that Thomas, “going to the Council at Lyons, was killed by a physician of Charles I., king of Sicily, who put poison into some sweetmeats, thinking to ingratiate himself with king Charles, because Thomas was of the lineage of the lords of Aquino, who had rebelled against the king, and doubting whether he should be made cardinal.”² Dante seems to have thought that the physician acted, not on his own account, but by orders from the king; and commentators of a later age assign the various motives which, as they think, would have determined the deed, and which are of varying degrees of probability. Certain it is that De Thoco and Ptolemy of Lucca,—who was Aquinas’s con-

¹ *Purg.* xx. 68, 69.

² Villani, lib. ix. c. 218.

fessor, and on terms of uninterrupted intimacy with him, and who describes his death,—knew nothing about it. The story may well have originated in the Italian hatred of the French intruder whose misdeeds would appear to make the author of the *De regimine principum* a natural victim of his jealous tyranny; and Dante would not have examined too closely a story which his own political feeling would have easily welcomed. Muratori doubts what credence should be given to Dante in the matter; and materials for discussing the point are found in the elaborate note of Scartazzini, and in Arrivabene.¹

Dante was born in 1265, while Aquinas and Bonaventure both died nine years afterwards, in 1274, the former in March, the latter in July. As a boy Dante must have been able to understand something of what was felt by his elders in that year, so deeply graven in the memory of mediæval Europe. Scholasticism had then taken full possession of the whole thinking and devotional life of the Church, and none could escape a share in the outburst of enthusiasm and pain which attended to the grave all that remained of the men whom it accounted of foremost moral and intellectual weight in Western Christendom.

It was whispered that the loss which the Church had sustained by the death of Aquinas was made known supernaturally and at the moment to his still

¹ *Secolo di Dante*, lib. i. p. 14.

surviving and aged master, Albert, at Cologne: "My brother Thomas of Aquino," he suddenly exclaimed, "my son in Jesus Christ, who has been a light of the Church, is dead; God has revealed it to me." Meanwhile Fossa Nuova became almost at once a place of pilgrimage, and to the scandal of the Dominicans, the Cistercian hosts of the dead theologian insisted on retaining his body in their conventual church. In spite of protests, frequent and vehement, they kept their prize for ninety-four years; they only surrendered it when, in 1368, Urban v. decided that it was the rightful possession of the Dominican Order. Even then the controversy was not closed; it raged yet a while between the claims of rival Dominican convents; in the event, while an arm was sent to Paris, the body of St. Thomas was translated to the great house of the Order at Toulouse, where it remained until it was, as is said, scattered to the winds by the great storm of the Revolution. It was afterwards recovered, and is now in St. Sernin at Toulouse.

Aquinas was canonised by John xxii. at Avignon, July 18, 1323, nearly two years after Dante's death in September 1321. The process of canonisation, as it is called, had already begun in 1319. John xxii., whatever else is to be said of him, was theologian enough to understand the true place of Aquinas in the world of Christian thought, even if he exaggerates in saying that Thomas "*plus illuminavit ecclesiam*

quam omnes alii doctores.”¹ But Dante’s genius had more than anticipated the formal honours of the Church; and in the tenth and three following cantos of the *Paradiso* we see what the highest minds of his day thought of the greatest of the Dominicans. Only two other men, perhaps,—since the time of the Apostles,—Augustine and Calvin, have left so profound an impress upon the after-thought of the Christian world. If a great epic poet had written at the close of the fifth century, a like honour might have been done to St. Augustine. If Milton had written fifty years earlier, and had put his strength into *Paradise Regained* instead of *Paradise Lost*, a like honour might have been assigned to Calvin. So far as distinction in the heaven of literature goes, Thomas was *felix opportunitate mortis*; and if he had not secured a foremost place among the giants of theology of all ages, he would still have lived for ever in the pages of the *Commedia*.

The *Summa Theologiæ* has many aspects, but it is, before all things, an attempt to present theology as the universal, all-comprehending science. And in this it is somewhat akin to the *Commedia*, in which all the facts of knowledge and experience are ranged, as a layman would range them, under or as part of the science of God. That such a marshalling of universal truth is abstractedly possible no serious believer in

¹ De Thoco, xiii. 81.

God can doubt; but the modern world knows too much to allow itself to hope that, with our present faculties, we can succeed in effecting it. Within the precincts of theology itself are large detached fragments, so to call them, of truth which, as we now know, cannot be brought, without intellectual violence, under the unifying empire of theological system; and when we pass beyond these precincts the world of human knowledge presents a spectacle which even Aquinas would have felt to make his task impossible. But the thirteenth century was not embarrassed by our larger outlook, and the forms which were taken by intellectual rebellion against the creed of the Church made good men anxious to present the whole field of knowledge after a fashion of which the work of Aquinas is the most complete and splendid type. As Dante ascends to the first heaven with Beatrice, his difficulties may represent the mental unrest of his age, upon which the Church's theology

“appresso d' un pio sospiro,
Gli occhi drizzò vèr me con quel sembiente,
Che madre fa sopra figliuol deliro.”¹

And then she explains how

“Le cose tutte e quante
Hann' ordine tra loro : e questo è forma
Che l' universo a Dio fa simigliante.

.

¹ *Par.* i. 100-102.

Nell' ordine ch' io dico sono accline
Tutte nature, per diverse sorti,
Più al principio loro, e men vicine.”¹

But did Dante get this from Aquinas?

It is perhaps more natural to think of Brunetto Latini, who, though fifty-three years Dante's senior, lived until Dante was twenty-nine—lived to the end of Dante's life in his grateful memory:

“La cara e buona imagine paterna.”

For Brunetto too aimed at an encyclopædic grasp of the knowledge of the time. His *Trésor* discusses everything from the Divine Essence down to the details of natural history and rhetoric; and if Dante was indebted to Aquinas for the completeness of some of his conceptions, he may well have owed the first impulse to Brunetto. For in this matter Brunetto himself was a pupil of the Dominicans. During his exile in France Brunetto would have met with the *Speculum Majus* of Vincent of Beauvais, who died in 1264, just a year before the birth of Dante, and whose work may not have been without its influence on the project, if not on the execution, of the *Summa*. The two works, in fact, represent a ruling tradition of the Dominican Order, which probably dates from its very foundation,—the effort to subdue the intellectual revolt of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries against the Church, by exhibiting the whole world of thought and

¹ *Par.* i. 103-105; 109-III.

knowledge, as religious men then conceived of it, in an unity so imposing as to overawe resistance. "Aquinas," says Ozanam, "rappelait Aristote, par l'universalité de son savoir, par la gravité pesante mais solide de son caractère, par son talent d'analyse, et de classification, par l'extrême sobriété de son langage."¹ This will hardly be thought exaggerated. It was, in fact, Aquinas who really baptized Aristotelian thought, and put an end to the suspicion with which the Church had for ages regarded it. In his hands scholasticism struck its roots most deeply into the logic and metaphysic of Aristotle, but then it moulded this rich material by the double and simultaneous action of a faith which certainly freed it from its one-sided sensuousness, and of a lucid common-sense which, in all questions that were conceived to be open, often reviewed received conclusions with unrivalled and fearless judgment. In discussing the nature of Being Thomas preserves a wary mean, which has been reproduced again and again in very unecclesiastical quarters, between the nominalism of Abelard and the exaggerated realism which had got into no less trouble with the Church. He was, I suppose, what we should call a very modified nominalist: he certainly did not believe in the hypothesis of an universal substance. In psychology he is thoroughly Aristotelian: the soul, so far from being merely conscience, or merely thought,

¹ *Dante et la Philosophie Catholique*, p. 3, c. 3, p. 338.

is to the full *ψυχή* as well as *πνεῦμα*: it comprises the whole higher side of the animated body; "*principium vitæ dicimus esse animam.*" In logic he keeps close to Aristotle; to the scepticism which would suggest that the forms of thought with which reason does her work themselves are illusory, he replies that they may be tested by experiment and evidence, and that in taking this evidence reason satisfies herself of their trustworthiness. In physics he is of very inferior authority to Albert, his master: he is, of course, governed by the crude suppositions and imperfect knowledge of his day: he quotes Aristotle as an ultimate authority, but when dealing with abstract problems, such as the contributions of form and matter respectively to the production of the individual, he touches regions of thought with which recent discussions have made us familiar, but in which it is not easy even now to go beyond him. His ethics are perhaps the field in which we see him at his best; his resolute belief, on the one hand, that all true virtue can be justified as virtue at the bar of reason, and, on the other, that God, conceived of as the Absolute Good, is the only adequate Goal of moral desire, invest this district of his work with a form and an unity which make it particularly attractive. In pure theology we see his temper in his rejection of the *a priori* argument for God's existence which found favour with St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, to the effect that to

conceive of God is to conceive of Absolute Perfection, but that God would be imperfect if He did not exist. And he is at home in the old Peripatetic argument which would demonstrate God's existence from the necessity of a First Cause or Mover.

In all of these regions of mental work the influence of Aquinas may, with more or less distinctness, be traced in the *Commedia*, but to attempt this in detail on the present occasion would be to trespass on an indulgence which has been already too heavily taxed. It must suffice to conclude by a single example.

In the first circle of the *Inferno*, among those who have lived virtuously, and have not to suffer for great sins, but who, not being baptized, are shut out from Paradise, are Avicenna, and

“Averrois, che il gran comento feo.”¹

Of these, Avicenna, Ibn-Sina, the greatest of Arabic physicians, had been the real teacher of Albert, Thomas's master, while Thomas himself had learned to comment upon Aristotle from the method of Averroes, Ibn-Roschid. It is not impossible that Dante's judgment of these eminent men was associated with the consciousness of intellectual indebtedness to them which must have been felt by the leading Dominicans: certainly it was much more lenient than that which

¹ *Inf.* iv. 144.

was common in Christendom of that day. M. Renan indeed seems to complain of Aquinas for regarding Averroes with literary admiration, yet also with orthodox distrust.¹ But the two views were equally natural, perhaps equally inevitable. Christendom regarded with dread the mass of negative and pantheistic speculation which had accumulated round the works of Aristotle as they passed through the schools of Morocco and Southern Spain; and Aquinas selected, as peculiarly dangerous, the theory of Averroes, of a universal intellect, which was probably (though of this I cannot speak) not peculiar to him among the Arab teachers, and which seems to have had great attractions for certain minds in Christendom. Thomas felt that man's personality, and with it his moral responsibility, was at stake, and he recurs to the subject again and again, not merely in his book *De Unitate Intellectus adversus Averroistas*, but in his commentaries on Aristotle and in his two *Summas*. Thomas too was jealous for the honour of Aristotle. According to Thomas, Averroes was "non tam peripateticus quam peripateticæ philosophiæ depravator." Of this conviction of Aquinas, and of the controversy it occasioned, a controversy which was only closed centuries later by a Bull of Leo x., there are not wanting traces in the *Commedia*.

In the seventh cornice of Purgatory Statius is

¹ *Averroës et l'averroïsme*, p. 236.

thought to refer to Averroes, when he tells Dante that, in the development of unborn life,

“è tal punto
Che più savio di te fe già errante ;
Sì che, per sua dottrina, fe disgiunto
Dall' anima il possibile intelletto
Perchè da lui non vide organo assunto.”¹

Averroes held that this universal intellect was within the reach of all men; that it was to be attained by study, speculation, renunciation of the lower desires of the soul; that, in this sense, it was “possibile,” that it alone was imperishable, and that the ideas which emanated from it only did not die. Here Dante seems to be reflecting the feeling of Aquinas about Averroes, as again he represents the faith of Aquinas in man's indestructible personality when describing the soul's departure from the body:

“E quando Lachesis non ha più lino,
Solvesi dalla carne, ed in virtute
Ne porta seco e l' umano e il divino.
L' altre potenze tutte quante mute,
Memoria, intelligenza, e volontade,
In atto molto più che prima acute.”²

The articles in the *Summa*, Part I. Questions 75-90, form, in their way, a complete treatise on psychology, and any one who would compare with them the well-known passages in the *Purgatory*, ii. 85, describing the meeting with Casella; xvi. 85 *sqq.*; xxv. 70 *sqq.*;

¹ *Purg.* xxv. 62-66.

² *Purg.* xxv. 79-84.

Par. vii. 140 *sqq.*, will see how varied is the correspondence, with here and there a significant difference.

It is scarcely possible to pass into pure theology without feeling Aquinas in almost every line. But, if this is to be traced at all, it must be on a distinct occasion: and to-day we take leave of him on the threshold, if indeed it may be called the threshold, of his work.

DANTE AND AQUINAS.¹

PART II.

IN a former section of this paper it was pointed out that Dante was, broadly speaking, a reflection, at once literary and popular, of much of the mind of St. Thomas Aquinas, as in turn Aquinas was a typical embodiment of the theological and speculative activity of the young Order of St. Dominic. This relation between Dante and St. Thomas was a natural product of the circumstances of his day. Dante's intellectual manhood coincided with the period during which the authority and methods of Aquinas were making their way to supremacy in the mind of the Western Church at each of its chief centres of influence, and particularly at Paris; but Dante was beforehand with the Church at large in the position which he assigns to Aquinas in the *Paradiso*. Some years were yet to elapse before the formal honours of canonisation were to be bestowed on the great teacher; but Dante, with an original audacity, to which it is difficult for us to-day to do entire justice, virtually anticipates the judgment of the Papal Chair, when he places Aquinas in the wreath of

¹ This Paper was read before the Oxford Dante Society, November 19, 1883.

twelve blessed spirits, in the fourth circle of his *Paradiso*, making him the foremost, if not the highest, interpreter of its glories.

I.

Indeed, how high Dante places the authority of Aquinas appears incidentally from the explanations furnished by Beatrice in the ninth heaven, where the poet beholds the nine choirs of angels.

On the question whether the angels were created simultaneously with the rest of the universe, or at a much earlier epoch, there were two opinions current in the ancient Church.

The belief in their earlier creation was prominently upheld by the authority of St. Gregory Nazianzen and of St. Jerome. In his commentary on Titus, Jerome observes that as yet our world has not lasted for six thousand years; "but," he exclaims, "how many previous eternities, spaces of time, beginnings of ages, must we not think of, during which Angels, Thrones, Powers, and Virtues have been serving God, and, without vicissitude or measure of time, have, by God's bidding, stood steadfast."

On such a subject the most learned Biblical scholar among the Latin Fathers would, until then, have been generally considered a sufficient authority as to the mind of Scripture; but Dante makes Beatrice reject the opinion, on the ground that it is at variance with

the import of such passages as Genesis i. 1 and Eccclus. xviii. 1 :

“Jeronimo vi scrisse lungo tratto
Di secoli, degli Angeli, creati
Anzi che l' altro mondo fosse fatto ;
Ma questo vero è scritto in molti lati
Dagli scrittor dello Spirito Santo ;
E tu ten' avvedrai, se bene agguati.”¹

Nay, reason, Beatrice argues, supports the inference which she draws from Scripture :

“Ed anche la ragione il vede alquanto,
Chè non concederebbe che i motori
Senza sua perfezion fosser cotanto.”²

The angels were created in order to administer the material universe; and it was antecedently unlikely that they would be brought into existence many ages before that universe was made.

Here Dante is thinking of the discussion in the *Summa*, Pars prima, Quæst. lxi. art. iii. Aquinas recognises the double opinion in antiquity; he will not allow that a doctrine supported by the high authority of Gregory Nazianzen can be safely considered erroneous; the caution of the theologian is in contrast with the brisk impetuosity of the poet. But of the two opinions, he says, “*illa probabilior videtur, quod angeli simul cum creaturâ corporeâ sunt creati.*” He argues that the angels are part of the universe; that they do not constitute an universe by themselves;

¹ *Par.* xxix. 37-42.

² *Ib.* 43-45.

that apart from the rest of the universe, they could not attain perfection. "Quod apparet ex ordine unius creaturae ad aliam. Ordo enim rerum ad invicem est bonum universi. Nulla autem pars perfecta est a suo toto separata." Here we have the very expression of Dante, who thus relies, in fact, not only on texts of Scripture, but also, and mainly, on the reasoning of Aquinas, as warranting a conclusion against the authority of the most learned of the four Latin Fathers. It would be difficult to suggest a more telling illustration of the place which Aquinas held in the theological thoughts of Dante.

This deference for St. Thomas may be traced in another department—Dante's reverence for Aristotle. With Dante, Aristotle is the master of those who know; and, like St. Thomas, the poet constantly adopts his opinions with entire deference. Thus in Virgil's discourse respecting love as the motive principle of action, free-will, and the source of morality,¹ we feel Aristotle's treatise *De Animâ*; and again, Aristotle himself, and not even Aristotle as presented by Aquinas. But it was mainly Aquinas's doing that Dante deferred to Aristotle at all. So late as 1209 the students of Paris were forbidden to read Aristotle. The rapid and entire change in the position assigned to Aristotle in the schools of Christendom before the end of the thirteenth century was largely due to the

¹ *Purg.* xviii. 1-76.

influence of three Popes—Gregory ix., Innocent iv., and Urban iv. Of these, Gregory enlisted the services of Albert of Cologne; Urban those of St. Thomas. The question was, how to distinguish the true Aristotle from the counterfeit, real or presumed, which had been presented by the Arabian commentators. To do this, Albert and Thomas devoted the best years of their lives. In the *Summa*, Aristotle is an authority only inferior to the Bible. Not only his *Ethics*, with their great generalisations respecting human nature, which will always be true, but his *Physics*, embodying the crudest guesses of an unscientific age, are quoted as final authorities. When Aristotle thus reigned in the *Summa*, it was natural that he should reign in the *Commedia*. If the poet could make any use of him—and there were plenty of opportunities for doing so—he was now shielded against suspicions which a century earlier would assuredly have beset him, by the example of the authoritative and cautious theologian.

Aquinas makes himself felt—probably, and as would be natural—more in the *Convito* of Dante than in the *Commedia*. But confining ourselves, as narrow limits require, to the *Commedia*, let us observe that its plan or structure is apparently less affected by Aquinas than by St. Bonaventure. Practical life shapes the plan of the poem in detail more than theological form,—as, notoriously, in the arrangement

of sins in the *Inferno*; and St. Bonaventure, mystic as he was, was before all things practical.

Dante's love of Plato, and of the idealist and mystical elements of his thought, would have powerfully drawn him to St. Bonaventure—the Plato of the thirteenth century, as was St. Thomas its Aristotle. Thus the order of the deadly sins followed in the *Purgatory*¹ is that given by Aquinas,² with the exception that in Aquinas avarice precedes sloth, *accidia*, or, as he calls it, *tristitia*; while in Dante sloth precedes avarice. But Dante's order is exactly that of St. Bonaventure,³ who explains the growth and development of deadly sin somewhat differently from St. Thomas, while both of them differ from the order of St. Gregory the Great in the well-known passage of the *Magna Moralia*,⁴ which is quoted by St. Thomas,⁵ and which has shaped the discussion of this district of moral theology in the Western Church,—except that the place of gluttony has generally been shifted from fifth to third, as more nearly corresponding to the average development of sin in human lives.

M. Ozanam observes that the idea of the *Paradiso*, in which the poet journeys through the spheres of heaven, each of which may be more or less distinctly associated with some form of excellence, until he reaches the Feet of the Most High, is probably sug-

¹ Cant. xiii.-xxvi.

² 1a. 2æ, qu. 84, art. 4.

³ *Breviloquium*, Pt. iii. c. 9, ed. Freiburg, 1881, p. 225.

⁴ xxxi. c. 17.

⁵ *Ut sup.*

gested by St. Bonaventure's beautiful *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*. Indeed, the influence of Bonaventure is largely traceable in many ethical and practical elements of the poem. Dante's characters are often a dramatic exhibition of the popular instructions in Christian life and morals to which the first Franciscans devoted themselves. Such a pathetic account of the occasion of her sin as that of Francesca da Rimini—

“Noi leggevamo un giorno per diletto
Di Lancilotto, come amor lo strinse”—¹

is probably the dramatisation of a practical warning which Dante associated with the memories of some sermon at Santa Croce in Florence, or at the humbler establishment of the Order in the centre of the city.

The influence of St. Thomas is less ethical than philosophical and speculative, and it is less to be traced in propositions distinctly characteristic of their author than in the general logical and theological apparatus of Dante's mind. Thomas is constantly endeavouring to trace order and relation between the abstract and the concrete, between the known and the hypothetical, between causes and imperfectly discerned effects. This characteristic of his intellect is felt by Dante: “Dice Tommaso conoscer l'ordine di una cosa a un'altra e proprio atto di ragione.”² Hence in the *Paradiso* Beatrice proclaims—

¹ *Inf.* v. 127, 128.

² *Convito*, iv. cap. 8.

“Le cose tutte quante
Hann’ ordine tra loro : e questo è forma
Che l’ universo a Dio fa simigliante.”¹

In the lower spheres of thought the desire to trace this order is satisfied by the operations of natural reason, by experience and demonstration: in the higher by Revelation.² The conversations which Dante makes himself hold in each sphere of existence, as with Virgil about the pains of hell,³ about the absence of shadow, except in his own case, at the entrance of Purgatory,⁴ and at the position of the sun on their left,⁵ and about the way in which the dead are helped by the prayers of the living,⁶ and respecting love in its relation to human action;⁷ with Farinata respecting the range of knowledge in the lost;⁸ with Statius respecting the mystery of birth in its relation to the soul;⁹ with Beatrice respecting the Redemption;¹⁰ with Charles Martel of Hungary respecting the difference between children and parents;¹¹ with St. Thomas himself respecting varieties and imperfections in nature,¹²—not to cite others,—illustrate the profound intellectual sympathy of the poet with the theologian. Dante is, like Thomas, a philosopher in the sense that he must have a combining, governing, harmonising theory for what he observes and thinks piecemeal; and the conversational form in which the

¹ *Par.* i. 103-105. ² *Ib.* ii. 61. ³ *Inf.* vi. *sub fin.* ⁴ *Purg.* iii. 14 *sqq.*

⁵ *Purg.* iv. 53 *sqq.* ⁶ *Ib.* vi. ⁷ *Ib.* xvii., xviii. ⁸ *Inf.* x. 98 *sqq.*

⁹ *Purg.* xxv. ¹⁰ *Par.* vii. ¹¹ *Ib.* viii. ¹² *Ib.* xiii.

sense of this mental necessity expresses itself belongs to his art and craft as a poet, just as the questions and articles of the *Summa* belong to that of the scholastic theologian. The direct influence upon Dante of the mind of St. Thomas may be traced in each of the three spheres into which, speaking roughly and popularly, his great work as a theologian divides itself.

1. At the beginning of the *Summa* Thomas deals largely with those ultimate and abstract ideas which are part of the original furniture of the human mind, and which, upon analysis, are seen to lead up to God and His essential attributes. With St. Thomas the science of Being is the science of God. Unity, the law which underlies all existence; goodness, the true object of all that lives and wills, and the privation of which is evil; truth, the object and satisfaction of all spiritual existences,—these are sure to centre at last in Him Whose essential attributes they are—

“Fecemi la divina potestate,
La somma sapienza e il primo amore.”¹

So frequent are the correspondences between these early chapters of the *Summa* and the strictly theological passages in the *Divina Commedia* that it is difficult not to believe that the poet must have studied them closely, or even learned them by heart. When Dante is questioned by St. Peter as to his faith, his answer is a condensation of *Summ. Theol.* Pt. i. qu. ii. art. 3 (*utrum Deus sit*)—

¹ *Inf.* iii. 5, 6.

“Io credo in uno Iddio
Solo ed eterno, che tutto il ciel move,
Non moto, con amore e con disio ;
Ed a tal creder non ho io pur prove
Fisice e metafisice, ma dalmi
Anco la verità che quinci piove
Per Moisé, per profeti, e per salmi,
Per l' Evangelio.”¹

So Adam's saying to Dante that God

“fa di sè pareggio all' altre cose,”²

boldly condenses *Summ. Theol.* i. qu. 16, art. 5, “Deus cum sit suum esse et intelligere, et mensura omnis esse et intellectus, in ipso non solum est veritas, sed ipse summa et prima veritas est.” God is said to make Himself a representative of His creatures when He makes His creatures in the image of Himself. (But see the elaborate note of Blanc on this difficult passage, s.v. Pareggio).

So when St. Thomas, explaining the simplicity of the Divine Essence, says that God “in uno actu vult omnia in sua bonitate,”³ he is apparently echoed by the eagle in Paradise—

“La prima volontà, ch' è per sè buona,
Da sè, che è sommo ben, mai non si mosse.”⁴

So the motives for creation, as stated in *Par.* xxix. 13, recall *Summ. Theol.* i. 19. 3, *contr. Gentiles* ii. 26.

And the profound thought of Aquinas, *Summ. Theol.* i. qu. 34, art. 3, “Quia Deus uno actu et se et

¹ *Par.* xxiv. 130-137.

³ *Summ. Theol.* i. qu. 19, art. 5.

² *Ib.* xxvi. 107.

⁴ *Par.* xix. 86, 87.

omnia intelligit, unicum verbum ejus est expressivum non solum Patris sed etiam creaturarum,"¹ reappears in the beautiful lines—

“Ciò che non more, e ciò che può morire,
Non è se non splendor di quella idea
Che partorisce, amando, il nostro Sire.”²

The verses which connect creation with an activity arising out of the distinctive inter-relations of the Persons of the Holy Trinity in *Par.* x. 1 seem to be based on *Summ. Theol.* i. qu. 45, art. 6. 2. Indeed, in the region of pure theology Dante keeps close to St. Thomas. Thomas, no doubt, on such a subject, has no beliefs, scarcely any judgments—that are exclusively his own; he does but exhibit and arrange in his own way the truths which in their entirety composed the central object of the faith of the Church. But he has his own way of approaching and exhibiting them, and here Dante seems to cling to him with particular care: he might perhaps feel more at liberty if he were more at a distance from the heart of the creed of Christendom. When, as they are ascending towards the first heaven, Beatrice answers Dante's second doubt as to how they could rise above the light bodies around them, her answer might have been given substantially (is it audacious to say so?) in other ways, but the opportunity is seized to echo St. Thomas's way of representing all life and nature tending, whether

¹ Cf. *Summ. Theol.* i. qu. 15, art. 2.

² *Par.* xiii. 52-54.

consciously or unconsciously, towards God, as the Last End no less than the Source of its being—

“Nell’ordine ch’io dico sono accline
Tutte nature, per diverse sorti,
Più al principio loro, e men vicine,”¹

which is a condensation of St. Thomas’s statement that “aliquid sua actione vel motu tendit ad finem dupliciter: uno modo sicut seipsum ad finem movens, sicut homo: alio modo, sicut ab alio motum ad finem sicut sagitta. . . . Illa ergo quae rationem habent seipsa movent ad finem. . . . Illa quae carent ratione, tendunt in finem propter naturalem inclinationem, quasi ab alio mota.”²

2. After the science of Absolute Being, which is that of God, comes that of created existences detached from matter, whether the disembodied souls of men, or the *ἀσώματα* proper, the bodiless ones, as St. Chrysostom calls them, in their unfallen state as angels, or in their misery and ruin as devils. This vast sphere of being is traversed by St. Thomas with great particularity; he follows these unseen existences into the various departments of their life and activity; he investigates their duties, capacities, relations with each other and with living men. And in all this he gives no deliberate play to imagination, though the subject might well be tempting: he pursues his course with a cold, dry, severe adherence to premises which he

¹ *Par.* i. 109-111.

■ *Summ. Theol.* ii. qu. 1, art. 2.

holds to be axiomatic, or at least authoritative, until a vast world is spread out before the eyes of his readers. Others there were in the Schools, no doubt, who ventured on these high themes;

“perchè in terra per le vostre scuole
Sì legge che l'angelica natura
È tal, che intende, e si ricorda, e vuole;
Ancor dirò, perchè tu veggi pura
La verità che laggiù si confonde,
Equivocando in sì fatta lettura.”¹

But in such lines as these Dante would not permit himself to think of the teacher who is already throned in Paradise among the wisest and the holiest. No doubt Aquinas's discussions must sometimes seem to us to pass beyond the limits of the ascertainable; and some who have since expounded him, like Suarez, have extended his speculations not always, from any point of view, with advantage; and much which in him was fresh and original and reverent, lost its charm even in a few years when it had been bandied to and fro in the Schools by men who only saw in it material for exhibiting logical dexterity. But when all deductions have been made, this part of the *Summa* remains the great repertorium of systematised religious thought on this subject among Western writers, and its remote influence is traceable where we might least expect it, and where scholasticism is vehemently denounced,—as, *e.g.*, even in the *Institutes* of Calvin.

¹ *Par.* xxix. 70-75.

Twice in his great work Aquinas is led to deal with this subject. In his survey of creation, the angels, their substance, their numbers, their distinctions, their relation to the question of probation, their relations, permanent and accidental, to the material world, their relations to the category of space, the conditions and limits of their intellectual life, their knowledge about God, about the material world, about mankind, about the Christian faith and means of grace, their degree of liability to intellectual or moral error, their differences in judgment and action arising from finiteness of knowledge, their hideous transfiguration into devils, are successively reviewed.¹ And, at a later stage, when he is considering, in its broadest aspects, the influence of creatures over one another, he encounters such questions as the power of one angel to affect the intellect and will of another, their employment of anything corresponding to language in their intercourse, the power of a third angel to follow what is passing between two, the influence which is wielded as a consequence of the hierarchical distinctions between angels revealed in Scripture, the nature and permanence of these distinctions, the corresponding question of distinct orders and governing power among fallen spirits, the power of good angels over material bodies, the various influences which they exert on human beings, on their wills, on their imaginations, on their

¹ *Summ. Theol.* i. Quæstt. 50-64.

bodily senses; their ministries of grace and of justice; their guardianship of souls, and the relationships thus involved; the nature, process, and reality of temptation on the part of devils, their power of working lying wonders, the limits of their influence on mankind, and the like.¹

Thus, we see, when Dante wrote there was a vast body of authoritative language ready to his hand on the subject which formed, if we may say so, the very framework and staple of his poem. For from the beginning of the Hell to the close of the Paradise he is constantly dealing with these bodiless existences; and to be acquainted so far as was possible with what might be said without presumption respecting their life and movements was not less than essential to him, if he was to write at all. He is at times so fearless, so explicit, at times so reserved and vague; he is so altogether at ease and at home in this world of mystery, because he has St. Thomas behind him.

We have already seen that Dante keeps close to Aquinas, and rejects the authority of St. Jerome and the Greeks, in teaching that the angels were created coincidentally with the rest of the Universe.² They differ from men in that they consist of form without matter; but in their form and essence they are still conceived of as distinct (as are capacity and act), and

¹ *Summ. Theol.* Pars i. Quæstt. 106-114.

² *Par.* xxix. 37.

herein they differ from God. So says St. Thomas,¹ and Dante is thinking of him when Beatrice explains that at their creation,

“ Forma e materia congiunte e purette
Usciro ad esser che non avea fallo.”²

Aquinas's striking *a priori* argument for the existence of beings who should be more like their Creator than any invested with material forms³ is glanced at in *Par.* xxix. 16-19, and his statement that it is reasonable that immaterial beings should exceed in multitude, beyond all comparison, beings clothed in matter, shapes the lines—

“ Questa natura sì oltre s' ingrada
In numero, che mai non fu loquela,
Nè concetto mortal, che tanto vada.
E se tu guardi quel che si rivela
Per Daniel, vedrai che in sue migliaia
Determinato numero sì cela.”⁴

The intellectual life of the angels consists in an uninterrupted sight of God. This sight includes all else, near and remote, past, present, and future. There is no division in thought, no succession of thought, no room for memory—

“ Queste sustanzie, poichè fur gioconde
Della faccia di Dio, non volser viso
Da essa, da cui nulla si nasconde :
Però non hanno vedere interciso
Da nuovo obbietto, e però non bisogna
Rimemorar per concetto diviso.”⁵

And yet this knowledge of things in God varies in

¹ *Summ. Theol.* i. 50, art. 2.

² *Par.* xxix. 22, 23.

³ *Pt.* i. 50, art. 1.

⁴ *Par.* xxix. 130-135; cf. *Dan.* vii. 10.

⁵ *Par.* xxix. 76-81.

degree, according to the rank and capacity of the angels;¹ the angels do not know everything.² Here Dante has his eye throughout on the discussion in *Summ. Theol.* i. qu. 57 and 58.

Dante's Lucifer necessarily suggests the familiar comparison with Milton's; and if he is artistically less interesting, he is much more like the real Satan, the Satan of Christian theology, whether Biblical or Patristic; though Milton, it will be remembered, paraphrases

“vidi tre facce alla sua testa!”³

“his face,

Thrice changed with pale ire, envy, and despair.”⁴

St. Thomas here as elsewhere steadies and chastens the imagination of Dante; often when the poet might seem to be giving the utmost reins to fancy, he is in reality following the divine. Take the vivid lines in which the instantaneous character of the probation of the angels is described:—

“Nè giugneriesi, numerando, al venti
Sì tosto, come degli Angeli parte
Turbò il soggetto dei vostri elementi.”⁵

“Ere one had reckoned twenty, e'en so soon
Part of the angels fell; and in their fall
Confusion to your elements ensued.”

But this is a result of St. Thomas's principle that “est proprium naturae Angelicae quod naturalem perfectionem non per discursum acquirat, sed statim per naturam habeat.”⁶ He allows of two

¹ *Par.* i. 103 sqq.

² *Ib.* xx. 70-72; xxi. 91-96.

³ *Inf.* xxxiv. 38.

⁴ *Paradise Lost*, iv. 144.

⁵ *Par.* xxix. 49-51.

⁶ *Summ. Theol.* i. 62. art. 5.

instants (*instantia*), as implied in the distinctness of probation from blessedness "secundum successionem in actibus," as he says; but that is all. In one moment Lucifer had in his pride chosen an end of action, "ad quod naturae suae viribus potuit pervenire,"¹ turning away his desire from that supernatural blessedness which comes of the grace of God, and thus—

" Principio del cader fu il maledetto
Superbir di colui, che tu vedesti
Da tutti i pesi del mondo costretto." ■

Dante, like St. Thomas, knows of no ἀποκατάστασις of the fallen angels, no possible lapse of the blessed. Satan is

" quel mal voler, che pur mal chiede,
Con l' intelletto,"³

while the angels never turn their gaze from the Face of God—

" non volser viso
Da essa,"⁴

since "Et voluntas bonorum angelorum confirmata est in bono, et voluntas daemonum obstinata est in malo."⁵

While Beatrice is engaged in pointing out to Dante the nine orders of angels, she pauses at the close of the first three to decide the eager controversy as to the formal cause of Blessedness. The Cherubim, Seraphim, and Thrones all are blessed in that they see deepest into the central and eternal Truth—

" in che si queta ogn' intelletto." ⁶

¹ *Summ. Theol.* i. 63. art. 3, 5, 6. ² *Par.* xxix. 55-57. ³ *Purg.* v. 112.

⁴ *Par.* xxix. 77. ⁵ *Summ. Theol.* i. 64. art. 2. ⁶ *Par.* xxviii 108.

Hence may be seen

“ come si fonda
L' esser beato nell' atto che vede,
Non in quel ch' ama, che poscia seconda.”¹

This is in deference to the somewhat strained reasoning of St. Thomas, in a passage in which apparently the schoolman gets the better of the mystic. “Blessedness,” he says, “cannot consist in the action of the will; because the will is constantly directed towards an absent object, and desire of such an object is clearly not the attainment of an end but only a motion towards an end. The will only experiences enjoyment when the end which it pursues is present to it; but an object does not become present because the will takes pleasure in it. If then an end is to be present to the will, something else than the action of the will must make it so; and an intellectual end does become present to us by the action of the intellect whereby the end itself thus becomes present to the will. Thus the essence of blessedness consists at last in an act of the intellect.” This analysis is not easily reconciled with the general experience that the essence of happiness does reside in the free play or exercise of affection upon a perfect object, or with the prominence given to the Seraphim in the received angelology of the Church; but Dante is in the hands of St. Thomas, and writes accordingly.²

¹ *Par.* xxviii. 109-111.

² *Summ. Theol.* Prima Secundæ, qu. 3, art. 4.

3. Dante betrays the guiding influence of St. Thomas very conspicuously when he touches upon human nature (in the narrower sense of the term) and on the human soul. Here again the *Convito* supplies more illustrations than the *Divina Commedia*: but as regards the creation of each single soul¹ (in opposition to the Traducianist hypothesis), the function of apprehension—

“ch’ a ragion discorso ammannà,”²

the large experimental basis of our knowledge—“Principium nostrae cognitionis est a sensu,”³ and, of course, in such questions as the theology of the Fall,⁴ the two are in close accord. How closely Dante keeps Aquinas in view in his allusions to the powers of the human mind,—to memory,⁵ imagination,⁶ understanding,⁷ will,⁸—is shown by Simonetti.⁹

But especially does Dante follow Aquinas in the point of his psychology which Aquinas had, unquestionably, most at heart. Like his great master Albert, Aquinas viewed with alarm the progress which was made by the Averroistic theory of the unity and

¹ *Purg.* xxv. 65 sqq.; *Summ. Theol.* i. 118. 2.

² *Purg.* xxix. 49; *Summ. Theol.* i. 84. 5.

³ *Summ. Theol.* i. 84. 6; cf. *Par.* iv. 40.

⁴ *Par.* xxvi. 114-117; *Summ. Theol.* 2a 2æ, qu. 163, art. 1.

⁵ *Par.* i. 4-12; *Summ. Theol.* i. qu. 78. 4.

⁶ *Purg.* xvii. 13-16; cf. *Summ. Theol.* i. qu. 111. 3.

⁷ *Par.* ii. 44; *Summ. Theol.* i. qu. 76.

⁸ *Par.* iv. 109; *Summ. Theol.* i. qu. 63. 1.

⁹ *Philosophia di Dante*, pp. 164-192 (Naples, 1845).

indivisibility, whether of the *intellectus possibilis* or the *intellectus agens* in separation from the soul itself, a theory which was, as he saw, irreconcilable with the personal immortality of man. One sees how carefully St. Thomas is on his guard against this throughout the psychological parts of his work:¹ "Omnes potentiae animae comparantur ad animam solam sicut ad principium. Sed quaedam potentiae comparantur ad animam solam sicut ad subjectum, ut intellectus et voluntas: et hujusmodi potentiae necesse est quod maneant in anima corpore destructo." Here we see the meaning of Dante in Statius's discourse, where the "più savio di te errante"² is doubtless Averroes—

" che, per sua dottrina, fe disgiunto
Dall' anima il possibile intelletto,"³

even if it be true, as M. Renan contends,⁴ that Averroes only meant the *intellectus agens*.

So the significant expression, "one single soul, which lives and feels and revolves within itself,"

" un' alma sola
Che vive e sente, e sè in sè rigira,"⁵

and the statement that when Lachesis has no more thread, the soul looses itself from the flesh and bears away with it both the human and the divine—what belongs to natural character and to supernatural

¹ *Summ. Theol.* i. 79, art. 2; *ib.* i. 77, art. 8.

³ *Ib.* 64, 65.

⁴ *Averr.* ii. 2.

² *Purg.* xxv. 63.

⁵ *Purg.* xxv. 74, 75.

grace—but also that while the other powers are mute:

“Memoria, intelligenza, e voluntade,
In atto molto più che prima acute.”¹

Again, the passage at the opening of *Purg.* iv. 1-12 is in point, where he expressly notices “that error which believes that one soul above another is enkindled in us.” When any one power of the soul duly performs any of its functions, the soul cannot be acted on by any other power; it is for the time being absorbed; it heeds not the flight of time; the faculty, *e.g.*, which listens is at large, that which keeps the soul entire is bound. That two powers cannot manifest themselves at once, as would be the case if there were two souls, is expressly stated by Aquinas, who considers the impossibility of two souls proved “per hoc quod una operatio animae cum fuerit intensa impedit aliam.”²

The guiding influence of St. Thomas is especially observable in Dante’s references to the doctrine of Grace. Thus he places Trajan and Ripheus—

“Ripheus justissimus unus
Qui fuit in Teucris et servantissimus aequi”³

—in the circle round the pupil of the Eagle in Paradise. Trajan’s case is, theologically speaking, more disturbed by the tradition of the extraordinary power

¹ *Purg.* xxv. 83, 84.

² *Summ. Theol.* i. qu. 76, art. 3.

³ Virgil, *Aen.* ii. 427.

of the prayers of St. Gregory, but Ripheus is visited by and corresponds with preventive grace,—which led to his conversion to Christianity—centuries before Christ had come—

“per grazia, che da sì profonda
Fontana stilla, che mai creatura
Non pinse l’occhio insino alla prim’ onda,
Tutto suo amor laggiù pose a drittura ;
Per che, di grazia in grazia, Dio gli aperse
L’occhio alla nostra redenzion futura :
Ond’ ei credette in quella, e non sofferse
Da indi il puzzo più del paganesmo,
E riprendeane le genti perverse.”¹

This is exactly Aquinas’s teaching: “Deus facienti quod est in se non denegat gratiam.” Cornelius, he says, is in point: he had implicit faith before the Gospel truth was made clear to him.² St. Augustine means this when he speaks of “inchoationes fidei.”³ Aquinas indeed makes theological room for Dante’s account of Trajan’s deliverance.⁴ The theory of congruous merit, extended to enable one man to win for another the first grace in the order towards conversion, is explained by a reference to Scripture language respecting the friendship that exists between God and souls in a state of grace: “Congruum est secundum amicitiae proportionem, ut Deus impleat hominis voluntatem in salvatione alterius.”

We must omit to trace Thomas’s influence in the doctrines of the Atonement, of the Church, of the

¹ *Par.* xx. 118-126.

³ *Ad Simpl.* i. 2. § 2 (Ben. ed. vi. 89d).

² 2a 2æ, qu. 10. art. 4.

⁴ 1a 2æ, qu. 114, art. 6.

Sacraments, and of the Four Last Things, as referred to by Dante.

II.

THE RESTRAINING INFLUENCE OF ST. THOMAS.

But there is one subject on which it may be said without impropriety that poetry has done much to mislead theology, in which we may trace not indistinctly the restraining influence of St. Thomas on the mind of Dante. Speaking generally, both poet and theologian are agreed in assigning a position of extraordinary glory to the Virgin Mother of our Lord. The strongest thing that St. Thomas permits himself to say is perhaps this. When treating of the Divine Omnipotence, he says that the Humanity of our Lord and the Blessed Virgin “habent quandam dignitatem infinitam ex bono infinito; quod est Deus.”¹ In Dante she is the “*donna del cielo*,”² Lucy, who moved

“la tua Donna,
Quando chinavi a ruinar le ciglia.”³

“Thy lady,
When on the edge of ruin closed thy eye.”

And he makes St. Bernard say—

“Vergine madre, figlia del tuo Figlio,
Umile ed alta più che creatura,
Termine fisso d’eterno consiglio,
Tu sei colei che l’umana natura
Nobilitasti sì, che il suo Fattore
Non disdegnò di farsi sua fattura.”⁴

¹ *Summ. Theol.* i. qu. 25, art. 6.

² *Par.* xxii. 106.

³ *Par.* xxxii. 137.

⁴ *Ib.* xxxiii. 1-6.

And Buonconte of Montefeltro, who fought on the Ghibelline side, and was slain at Campaldino, tells Dante how he repented in the act of dying—

“ Quivi perdei la vista, ■ la parola
Nel nome di Maria finii,”¹

while the demon complained to his guardian angel that he had been robbed of a soul “per una lagrimetta.” In Purgatory again, they who had delayed repentance sing the pathetic and mournful *Salve Regina* on the green and on the flowers,² while in the ninth heaven, around Mary, the “coronata fiamma” of the blessed chants, the Paschal antiphon—

“ *Regina caeli* cantando sì dolce,
Che mai da me non si partì il diletto.”³

It is in this twenty-third canto of the *Paradiso* that the poet surrenders himself to an ecstasy of refined enthusiasm at the feet of the Virgin Mother—

“ Quivi è la rosa in che il Verbo Divino
Carne si fece.”⁴

She bears—

“ Il nome del bel fior, ch' io sempre invoco
E mane e sera,”⁵

and in the highest sphere—

“ tutti gli altri lumi
Facean sonar lo nome di MARIA.”⁶

For, as St. John explains, she alone, like her Divine Son, had carried her body into heaven—

“ Con le due stole nel beato chiostro
Son le due luci sole che saliro.”⁷

¹ *Purg.* v. 100, 101. ² *Ib.* vii. 82. ³ *Par.* xxiii. 128, 129.
⁴ *Par.* xxiii. 73, 74. ⁵ *Ib.* 88, 89. ⁶ *Ib.* 110, 111. ⁷ *Ib.* xxv. 127, 128.

And when Beatrice has returned to her throne, St. Bernard points to—

“ la Regina del cielo, ond' i' ardo
Tutto d' amor,”¹

and to

“ il glorioso scanno
Della Donna del cielo,”²

high between the saints of the Old and New Testament, and he tells Dante that if he would indeed penetrate what remains of the Vision of Heaven he must unite with him in the supplication to Mary—

“ Regina, che puoi
Ciò che tu vuoi, che conservi sani,
Dopo tanto veder, gli affetti suoi,”³

and then the poet pierces to the inmost shrine, and enjoys at least a glimpse of the Highest Existence.

Such is the position assigned to Mary: partly the severe and inevitable result of serious belief in such a doctrine as the Divine Incarnation, but partly also the exaggeration and surplusage of popular fancy and poetic ecstasy. This idea of Mary, arising in part out of her relation to the economy of the Divine Redemption, is supplemented in Dante by a special sense of her personal and ethical beauty. It is from Mary that the souls in Purgatory gain an example of each of the virtues which are opposed to each of the deadly sins. They who are expiating pride behold Mary at

¹ *Par.* xxxi. 100, 101.

² *Ib.* xxxii. 28, 29.

³ *Ib.* xxxiii. 34-36.

the Annunciation humbly accepting the Divine purpose—

“ quella,
Che ad aprir l' alto amor volse la chiave.
Ed avea in atto impressa esta favella,
Ecce Ancilla Dei.”¹

Among the voices of the unseen spirits which fall upon the ear of the envious, the first recalls Mary's care for others at the feast of Cana—

“ La prima voce che passò volando,
Vinum non habent, altamente disse.”²

The angry are confronted in vision with the scene in the temple, after the disappearance of the Child Jesus among the doctors, where

“ in un tempio più persone :
Ed una donna in sull' entrar con atto
Dolce di madre, dicer : Figliuol mio,
Perchè hai tu così verso noi fatto ?
Ecco, dolenti, lo tuo padre ed io
Ti cercavamo. E come qui si tacque,
Ciò, che pareva prima, dispario.”³

And when, in the fourth circle, the mighty crowd of the slothful overtake Dante—

“ due dinanzi gridavan piangendo :
Maria corse con fretta alla montagna,”⁴

—referring to the Visitation.

And before Hugh Capet describes the miseries which avarice had brought upon the royal house of

¹ *Purg.* x. 41-44.

³ *Ib.* xv. 87-93.

² *Ib.* xiii. 28, 29.

⁴ *Ib.* xviii. 99, 100.

France, he calls to mind the poverty which surrounded the cradle of Him Who, when He was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we, through His poverty, might be rich—

“ Dolce Maria :
 Povera fosti tanto,
 Quanto veder si può per quell' ospizio,
 Ove sponesti il tuo portato santo.”¹

Again, in the sixth circle, a voice from within the leaves of the mysterious tree reminds the gluttonous, as the unseen angel had reminded the envious, of Mary at the feast of Cana, but now with another moral object—

“ Poi disse : Più pensava Maria, onde
 Fosser le nozze orrevoli ed intere,
 Ch' alla sua bocca.”²

Once more, as the spirits who are being cleansed from sins of impurity sing the matin hymn, *Summe Deus Clementiae* in “the bosom of the great heart,” they recall Mary's example at the Annunciation ere they begin it again—

“ Appresso il fine ch' a quell' inno fassi,
 Gridavano alto : *Virum non cognosco* ;
 Indi ricominciavan l' inno bassi.”³

This is no accident when Mary thus appears as representing at each of these critical points of human activity practical virtue in its ideal completeness as confronted with the seven typical forms of sin. This ethical glory of Mary runs parallel with that which

¹ *Purg.* xx. 19-25.

■ *Ib.* xxii. 142-144.

³ *Ib.* xxv. 127-129.

arises from her unique share in the Divine Incarnation: and the two currents of thought meet and intermingle in the *Paradiso*. In the *Paradiso* it might seem again and again as if the poet must perforce yield to the impulse and ecstasy which rules him, and place the Virgin Mother altogether beyond the sphere of sin by proclaiming her immaculate in her conception. There are two or three points at which it might have seemed natural, almost inevitable, had it been possible, for him to give expression to this idea; but it is only of Mary's Son that Dante sings—

“ l'uom che nacque e visse senza pecca.”¹

What was the restraining influence? A century and a half had passed since the establishment of the festival of the Conception by the Canons of Lyons and the famous protest of St. Bernard. St. Bonaventure, while shrinking from the full operation of the doctrine, goes very near asserting it.² Before Dante died, Duns Scotus, a young student from Northumberland, had, within the newly-built walls of Merton, shaped the speculations which undoubtedly gave a most powerful impulse to the dogma throughout the West. The restraining influence was beyond question that of St. Thomas: and that St. Thomas should have hesitated as he did is remarkable, because his principle that a solemnity sanctioned by the Church—and this was

¹ *Inf.* xxxiv. 115.

² *Comm. in Lib. iii. Sent.*

already the case with the festival of the Conception—implies the sanctity of its object, must have inclined him in an opposite direction. He is governed, however, by two considerations, one of which he gets from Scripture and one from St. Augustine. According to Augustine the ordinary laws of human birth involve conception in a transmitted original sin. According to Scripture, God the Son is the Saviour of all men,¹ and therefore, argues Thomas, of Mary, and therefore there was something in Mary from which she needed to be saved. The attitude of St. Thomas on this question obliged and enabled his Order for six hundred years to resist, first Franciscans, then Jesuits,—a religious world perpetually in arms around them:—their resistance has only ceased in our own day. And not the least of the first results of that attitude was this, that in the *Divina Commedia* Mary is everything else,—but she is not conceived immaculate.

On the other hand, in the sphere of politics, more perhaps than elsewhere, the poet is independent of the divine. Aquinas, who looked at politics in the light of abstract truth, even to a great extent in his *De regimine principum*, was practically what would have been called now-a-days a liberal. He held that the will of the people was, at any rate, one channel through which the Divine Will respecting government expressed itself, and after considering the Scriptural passages

¹ 1 Tim, iv. 10.

which were used so largely by our Caroline divines for a doctrine of absolute non-resistance, he concludes that "principibus saecularibus in tantum homo obedire tenetur, in quantum ordo justitiae requirit. Et ideo si non habeant justum principatum sed usurpatum, vel si injusta praecipiant, non tenentur eis subditi obedire: nisi forte per accidens, propter vitandum scandalum vel periculum."¹ Kindred doctrines were no doubt carried forward to sanction terrible consequences in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by the Jesuit theologians. But we cannot imagine Aquinas placing Brutus, the slayer of Caesar, in the jaws of Lucifer, in the lowest depth of hell. Aquinas would have approached the question as a theologian; he would have held probably that the act of Brutus made it impossible to entertain the hope that there was in his case such correspondence with prevenient grace as he would have allowed in some Pagans. But if hell, like heaven, has many mansions, the man of general lofty integrity, who was also the emancipator of Rome, even though the emancipation was attempted by a deadly crime, would not have been placed in the lowest and the last. In Dante the passions of Ghibelline politics invest the murder of Caesar with the darkest forms of inhuman atrocity, and Landino in vain endeavours to save the judg-

¹ *Summ. Theol.* 2a 2æ, qu. 104, art. 6. *Utrum Christiani tenentur saecularibus potestatibus obedire.*

ment of the great poet at the expense of the obvious meaning of the text.

These are but fragments of a vast subject, upon which a few dashing generalisations, perhaps less accurate than bold, would have been more welcome. But the truth is that a really faithful treatment of such a theme would rather lie in a close study of the texts of Dante and St. Thomas respectively within some very narrow and clearly marked out department, whether of philosophy or theology. I have only recognised this when it was too late to act upon it. As it is, perhaps enough has been said to show that, if it is inaccurate to call Aquinas the most poetical of theologians, since though he could write good hymns, his theological methods were severely prosaic, it is true, however, that Dante, besides being much else, is, upon the whole, the most theological of Christian poets.

DANTE AND THE FRANCISCANS.¹

IN two former papers I made an attempt to trace, within narrow limits, and only in a fragmentary manner within those limits, the relation of Dante's mind, as we know it in the *Divina Commedia*, to the thought, but more particularly to the theological thought, of St. Thomas Aquinas. It is not, perhaps, too much to say that Dante holds St. Thomas, beyond any other religious teacher, as his master; and that in this we have, if it were needed, a new proof of his own insight and genius, as anticipating in a remarkable degree the slowly-reached but deliberate verdict of a later day. For although Aquinas enjoyed immense authority among his contemporaries, yet it was disputed, and in Dante's own lifetime, by some very considerable writers, such as Harry of Ghent, a monk of Aquinas's own order, whose reputation as a teacher in Paris earned for him the title of Doctor Sollemnis, and who died in 1293, at the age of seventy-six, as Archdeacon of Tournay. Even before his death St. Thomas was accused not only of bad philosophy but of bad theology. As we know from

¹ This Paper was read before the Oxford Dante Society on May 19, 1883.

the only treatise of his in which his habitual impassiveness is laid aside for the finer irony of an unwilling controversialist,¹ he was accused of denying the doctrine of the Creation, because he insisted that it did not admit of scientific demonstration. His reply silenced his opponents; but he was no sooner laid in his grave in 1274, than his critics resumed their attacks. Dante can scarcely have failed to know that in 1276, within two years of the death of St. Thomas, a Board of Doctors of Divinity in the University of Paris, presided over by Stephen Tempier, who was from 1268 to 1279 bishop of the diocese, solemnly condemned as heretical three propositions extracted from St. Thomas, and excommunicated any who should maintain them. It ought in justice to be remembered that this sentence was not only approved by the theological faculty of the University of Oxford,—then, it would seem, as in later days, somewhat given to follow the lead of rival seats of learning,—but the Oxford doctors, guided by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Kilwarby,² himself, strange to say, a Dominican, succeeded in saving their own character for originality in this department of research by extracting and condemning a fourth heretical proposition from the writings of St. Thomas.

¹ *Opusculum de Æternitate mundi contra murmuratores.*

² Robert Kilwarby, Primate from 1273 to 1279, when he resigned the See on being made Cardinal of Oporto, and was succeeded by Peckham.
—Collier, *Eccl. Hist.* ii. 546.

Whether Dante knew of these controversial enterprises or not, he was entirely unaffected by them. He certainly detected in the mind of the greatest teacher of the thirteenth century those elements which command the attentive respect of men when the changes of thought and feeling which come with time have had their full range of influence. When the Council of Trent met in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in that city, the *Summa* of Aquinas was placed side by side with the Bible in the midst of the assembled bishops, and on the other hand he, and with one exception he alone among the schoolmen, has outlived the influence of the Reformation on its own ground. To take two of our own divines: Hooker is under great, though it must be added too often unacknowledged, obligations to him; Sanderson owes him scarcely less a debt, which he is not afraid to acknowledge. And when the conventional contempt for scholasticism—a literary fashion which was in the main the product of ignorance endeavouring to make itself respectable by taking shelter partly under the true but misapplied doctrines of the *Novum Organum*, partly under the forms of the philosophy of Locke—when this had spent itself, and men had begun to suspect that they had been turning their backs on one of the most interesting chapters in the history of the human mind, Aquinas emerges from the clouds as still the teacher who beyond all others attracts and

repays the modern student who would learn what the extraordinary mental activity of the thirteenth century, exercised as it was on very imperfect materials, has still to teach him. And the triumphs of Aquinas, ancient and modern, are the triumphs of Dante.

But it is impossible to forget that side by side with Aquinas and the Order of St. Dominic—of whose learning and method Aquinas was the highest expression—there was another rival Order, with teachers and a temper of its own, which could not but arrest the attention, if it did not equally control the mind, of the poet. What was the mental attitude of Dante towards the Order of St. Francis and those of the earlier teachers of whom he knew or might have known something?

I.

Here it must be remembered that Dante reflects an unquestioned belief of religious people in his day, that the establishment of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders was a signal illustration of Christ's providential care of His Church. It was

“La provvidenza, che governa il mondo
Con quel consiglio nel quale ogni aspetto
Creato è vinto pria che vada al fondo.”¹

It was this Providence which ordained two princes (Dominic and Francis) for the Church's benefit, to be

¹ *Par.* xi. 28-30.

on this and that side of the Church's path a guide to her—

“ Due Principi ordinò in suo favore,
Che quinci e quindi le fosser per guida.”¹

This view, which is placed by Dante in the mouth of St. Thomas, is echoed with greater detail by St. Bonaventure. The Christian army, he says, was moving slowly after its standards; it was sadly needing confidence and discipline—

“ dietro all' insegna
Si movea tardo, sospeccioso e raro ”²

—doubtful about the faith and reduced in numbers. Then it was that the heavenly Emperor provided two champions, who by word and action would rally the wandering host—

“ lo imperador che sempre regna,
Provvide alla milizia, ch' era in forse.”³

He raised up

“ due campioni, al cui fare, al cui dire
Lo popol disviato si raccolse.”⁴

There was no question with Dante that each founder was conspicuous in sanctity, or that each Order was necessary to the Church—

“ com' elli ad una militaro,
Così la gloria loro insieme luca.”⁵

And yet there was a broad distinction between the two Orders, observable in their respective founders,

¹ *Par.* xi. 35, 36.

² *Ib.* xii. 38, 39.

³ *Ib.* 40, 41.

⁴ *Ib.* 44, 45.

⁵ *Ib.* 35, 36.

and in the main adhering to them. Francis was a man of practice, Dominic a man of speech—

“ Al cui fare, al cui dire.”

Francis would restore the life of the Church; Dominic its faith. Francis had his eye chiefly on the bad lives of average Christians; Dominic was anxious about the influence of the Arab philosophy and the progress of the Albigenses. The instrument by which Francis made his way was fervour; the weapon of Dominic was religious philosophy. Both seemed angels to the contemporary Church; but Dominic was a cherub, Francis was a seraph.

“ L’ un fu tutto serafico in ardore,
L’ altro per sapienza in terra fue
Di cherubica luce uno splendore.”¹

Thus, in the first instance at any rate, the Dominicans addressed themselves to the educated; the Franciscans to the people. The architecture of a Dominican church, with its large nave, and as few chapels or side-altars or intercepting columns as might be, shows the hand of an Order which set store on making the most of public teaching. The Franciscan churches, which, as a rule, were broken up by many screens and many altars into a collection of associated but practically separate chapels and oratories, show the temper of an Order which, in its

¹ *Par.* xi. 37-39.

great effort to raise the life of the people to a higher moral level, would follow the people's instincts,—with more of sympathy perhaps than of effort at guidance,—in the whole cycle of acceptable devotions or superstitions.

Not that any such contrasts between men or societies are ever unmodified by a certain interchange of distinctive characteristics. The family of St. Francis, if not Francis himself, found their way into the chairs of the Universities—at one time Oxford was practically in their hands,—and they made some great contributions to theology; while Dominic, no less than Francis, as Dante is careful to tell,

“Poi con dottrina e con volere insieme
Con l'offizio apostolico si mosse.”¹

And, indeed, if faith, not poverty, was the virtue which, on the whole, Dominic particularly espoused, yet the first desire which was manifest in him was towards the first counsel of Christ, the counsel to “sell that thou hast and give to the poor”—

“il primo amor che in lui fu manifesto,
Fu al primo consiglio che diè Cristo.”²

In this “root of the matter”—as the thirteenth century would have deemed it—he was at one with St. Francis.

It was natural that Dante's moral and intellectual temper would have inclined towards the Dominican

¹ *Par.* xii. 97, 98.

² *Ib.* 74, 75.

ideal. Dante's anxious interest in the problems of the time, his reserve, his distant, proud, austere severity, not to speak of other characteristics, would have attracted him to the less popular Order and its founder—

“l'amoroso drudo
Della fede cristiana, il santo atleta,
Benigno ai suoi, ed ai nemici crudo.”¹

For Dante, St. Dominic is the “husbandman, whom Christ chose to place in His garden, to aid Him,”² nay, he is “messo e famigliar di Cristo,”³ “Christ's messenger and companion.” Colleague of Francis, he yet was worthy to guide the bark of Peter:

“degno
Collega fu a mantener la barca
Di Pietro in alto mar per dritto segno.”⁴

With all Dominic's love for knowledge and thought, he was not, Dante saw, to be classed with the pedants who paraded ponderous learning, and had no higher aim beyond,—with Cardinal Henry of Ostia, the commentator on the Decretals, or with Taddeo Alderotti of Bologna, the translator of the Ethics into Italian. St. Dominic's love of learning was a department of his love of an object beyond,—

“per amor della verace manna,
In picciol tempo gran dottor si feo;”⁵

his business was to look after the vine which God

¹ *Par.* xii. 55-57.

² *Ib.* 71, 72.

³ *Ib.* 73.

⁴ *Ib.* xi. 118-120.

⁵ *Ib.* xii. 84, 85.

had planted among the nations, and the whitening leaves of which betrayed the secret disease which was killing it:

“si mise a circuir la vigna,
Che tosto imbianca, se il vignaio è reo.”¹

All that he asked of the Pope was leave to fight against an erring world;² where the resistance to error was stoutest, there his blows were most felt; he and his were a fountain of thought and eloquence by which the garden of the Church was watered.

“Di lui si fecer poi diversi rivi,
Onde l’orto cattolico si riga,
Sì che i suoi arbuscelli stan più vivi.”³

Dante’s language about St. Dominic places him, on the whole, higher than St. Francis. And his disappointment at the failure of the Dominicans of his own lifetime to realise their ideal is greater than his disappointment at a parallel failure on the part of the Franciscans. St. Thomas is made to make larger admissions as to the degeneracy of his brethren than are made by St. Bonaventure. Those who were true to their founder among the Dominicans were so few that a little cloth would furnish their cowls;

“son sì poche,
Che le cappe fornisce poco panno.”⁴

Dante’s deepest sympathies were with Dominic; but he had too keen an eye for moral beauty, and, it may be added, was too well furnished with the

¹ *Par.* xii. 86, 87.

² *Ib.* 94.

³ *Ib.* 103-105.

⁴ *Ib.* xi. 131, 132.

instincts of a statesman not to be able to do justice to St. Francis. His quick and wide observation of all that touches the life of humanity,—of all that promotes individual wellbeing, as well as of all that moves the world,—however secret the influence, however humble the agency, would have made him alive to the importance of an Order so wide in its influence, so penetrating and sympathetic in its practical temper. If in the *Commedia* Dominic must be allowed to rank higher than Francis, yet more is said about Francis than about Dominic. To a student of humanity like Dante, the more popular Order was necessarily of more account, whatever might be his individual preference.

As we read the panegyric on St. Francis which Dante has placed in the mouth of St. Thomas Aquinas, it is impossible not to feel the way in which the poet had caught the mood of popular devotion to the “poverel di Dio”—God’s own poor man.¹ The affectionate and elaborate description of the situation of Assisi; the popular play upon the name, when once Francis had been recognised as the sun of the contemporary Church, to describe his rising (Assisi);² then the choice of poverty, described as a fair lady, for whose sake Francis braved his father’s displeasure, and whom he wooed and won with the passionate ardour of a devoted lover,

“Poscià di di in di l’ amò più forte,”³

¹ *Par.* xiii. 33.

² *Ib.* xi. 52, 53.

³ *Ib.* xi. 63.

is all popular language of the time, reminding us of the beauties of the "fioretti di San Francesco"—language dear to the heart of the poor because it sheds, as St. Francis shed in an eminent degree, the glory of moral beauty as well as the glory of poetry over their hard lot. Poverty, voluntarily accepted for the good of others, had as much right to be personified as any other virtue, or mode, or choice of life; and Francis, knowing that the heart of the people will never care much for an abstraction, but is easily won by a concrete presentation of the abstract, made his way not least by this characteristic mode of thought and speech.

" Francesco e Povertà per questi amanti
Prendi oramai nel mio parlar diffuso.
La lor concordia e i lor lieti sembianti,
Amore e maraviglia e dolce sguardo
Facean esser cagion de pensier santi." ¹

And thus it was that the wealthy, like Bernard of Quintavalle, and Giles, and the priest Silvester, sold their possessions and followed this ideal and idealising bridegroom, who had won so fair a bride—

"Dietro allo sposo ; sì la sposa piace." ²

For Poverty appealed to them not only as a fair, but as an undeservedly neglected lady. She had had her day of high recognition and honour. She had even,

¹ *Par.* xi. 74-78.

² *Ib.* xi. 84.

on the most solemn of all occasions, been assigned a higher place than the Virgin Mother :

“dove Maria rimase giuso,
Ella con Cristo pianse in sulla croce.”¹

But since then how different had been her lot! Who can doubt that scores of the early Franciscan sermons, burning with suppressed fire, are compressed into the lines in which poverty is represented as leading a widowed and neglected life in the Church during the eleven centuries and more that had passed between the Redemption and the appearance of St. Francis—

“Questa, privata del primo Marito,
Mille cent’anni e più dispetta e scura
Fino a costui si stette senza invito.”²

Dante feels it to be due to his own literary and cultured self to decorate his reproduction of popular Franciscan language by a reference to Lucan’s account of Caesar’s visit to the hovel of the fisherman Amyclas,³ but he is not the less really, for the time, controlled by the enthusiasm which he describes. The two sanctions of the Order by Rome (*sigillo a sua religione*)⁴ accorded by Innocent III. and Honorius III., though not without hesitation; the thirst for martyrdom which leads Francis to join the crusading host before Damietta, and then to make a

¹ *Par.* xi. 71, 72.

³ *Phars.* v. 504; *Par.* xi. 68.

² *Ib.* 64-66.

⁴ *Par.* xi. 93.

mission into the camp of the Sultan; his reception of the Stigmata—when

“ Nel crudo sasso, intra Tevero ed Arno,
Da Cristo prese l' ultimo sigillo,
Che le sue membra due anni portarno ;”¹

and finally his death, when he commended his dearest lady Poverty to the care of his brethren whom he was leaving, need not be dwelt on at greater length, though each incident is pregnant with interest. Dante expresses his judgment on Francis when he classes him with St. Benedict, and even St. Augustine;² and when he makes St. Benedict range Francis as a moral workman with himself and even St. Peter,

“ Pier cominciò senz' oro e senza argento,
Ed io con orazioni e con digiuno,
E Francesco umilmente il suo convento,”³

it is implied that the Church of St. Peter was very wealthy; that the Benedictines did not fast and pray; that the Franciscans were no longer humble. But this does not affect the position which is assigned to Francis.

Perhaps the most characteristic notice of St. Francis in the *Commedia* is his momentary appearance after death as the friend of Guido da Montefeltro. Guido had hoped to make amends for a rude soldier's life by entering the Order of St. Francis :

“ Io fui uom d' arme, e poi fui cordelliero,
Credendomi, sì cinto, fare ammenda.”⁴

¹ *Par.* xi. 106-8. ² *Ib.* xxxii. 35. ³ *Ib.* xxii. 88-90. ⁴ *Inf.* xxvii. 67, 68.

But Boniface VIII. had asked his advice as to the best method of dealing with his enemies of the Colonna family in Rome, and Guido, after hesitation, had recommended large promise with small intention of keeping it:

“Lunga promessa con l’attender corto.”¹

Boniface gave Guido absolution by anticipation; and upon Guido’s death St. Francis came to claim a soul which had in life been a member of his Order. But Francis had to yield it to “one of the black cherubin,” who insisted that, in consequence of Guido’s fraudulent counsel, the soul of Guido rightly belonged to him, and that, since Guido could not have repented of that which he meant to do, Boniface’s absolution was worthless. The position already assigned to Francis in the other world, as a friend of sinners who had become Franciscans, belongs to Dante’s recognition of the power of the popular creed and of the popular Order. The victory of the demon, who here has moral right and fact on his side, is not merely a humiliation for Pope Boniface; it vindicates Dante’s own moral attitude towards a monastic conception which so easily admitted of such large abuse, and may be more particularly intended to mark his sense of a wider danger to which popular Orders are likely to be exposed.

The decline which Dante attributes to the Fran-

¹ *Inf.* xxvii. 110.

ciscans after their founder's death had two distinct phases, each of which is apparently noticed by Dante.

The first he describes by two metaphors which run into each other. Like a revolving wheel, the Order has deserted the orbit which the highest part of its circumference had reached: like bad wine, it deposits mould, not crust, in the cask:—

“Ma l' orbita, che fe la parte somma
Di sua circonferenza, è derelitta,
Sì ch' è la muffa dov' era la gromma.”¹

Dante mentions no names; perhaps the subject was too delicate, but history supplies the omission.

One of the more perplexing characters in the Church history of the period is Elias, the first General of the Franciscan Order after the founder's death. He entered it in 1211, fifteen years before the death of St. Francis, and became Provincial of Etruria in 1216. His preaching won many adherents; among others Cesarius of Spire, who afterwards opposed him so vehemently. Even within the lifetime of St. Francis there was a great division of opinion within the Order as to the degree of poverty which was obligatory upon its members. The stricter opinion was that such poverty should be absolute, like that of St. Francis; but a laxer opinion maintained that this was impossible for all but a small number of elect souls, and that certain goods might be possessed, and

¹ *Par.* xii. 112-114.

certain relations with the world maintained, without disloyalty to the spirit of the Order. Of this view Elias was the champion; he was apparently, in fact, a refined man of the world, who had heart and piety enough to admire a life like that of Francis, but who could not think that it was necessary that every monk should lead it. A good sort of man, he had made a mistake in being a monk,—at any rate, a monk of the Order of St. Francis, whose concentration and intensity of purpose were wholly unwelcome to him.

Thus it came to pass that Elias was a trouble to St. Francis during the last eight years of his life. Elias contrived to win over Cardinal Ugolino, afterwards Gregory IX., and to induce him to use his authority to urge St. Francis to soften the rigour of the rule of poverty, and to govern the Order through a council of wise brethren. Francis refused; and yet such were the practical qualities of Elias that, when Francis left Italy for Egypt, he made Elias his Vicar-General. Elias seized the opportunity to promote a general relaxation of discipline, and St. Francis returned to depose him from his office in 1220. In 1221, Elias was again reinstated; in 1223, he was again at war with St. Francis about a new rule; and when St. Francis sickened for death, Elias was still in such a position that the whole practical direction of the Order fell into his hands.

Thus when Francis was gone, and the chapter of

the Order, held in 1227 at Rome, had to elect a General, they elected Elias. He pleaded that his health would not allow him to walk on foot, and to submit to other privations enjoined by the rule. "Very well," cried the monks, "eat gold and ride on horseback." The administration of the Order by Elias was, from his own point of view, brilliant. Many learned men were attracted to the Order; it filled professorships at the universities; the splendid church at Assisi, decorated by Giotto, was prepared as a worthy resting-place for the body of St. Francis; money was collected, under Papal sanction, and, despite of the rule, in all the provinces of the Order. Elias himself had a well-furnished cell, rode a splendid charger, and was followed by a train of servants. At last the stricter party in the Order could bear it no longer; in the chapter of 1230, under the guidance of St. Antony of Padua (not to be confounded with the St. Antony of *Par.* xxix. 124, with his pig), and of Adam de Marisco, they protested against this extreme violation of the rule. Gregory IX., now Pope, was obliged to side with them, and Elias, notwithstanding an ingenious defence of his proceedings, was deposed. In 1236 his partisans were strong enough to elect him again; again the old luxury and laxity recurred; again, through the influence of his most distinguished convert, Cesarius of Spires,¹ he was deposed in 1239.

¹ Cesarius was murdered in gaol.

He then became intimate with the Emperor Frederic II., who was alive to his practical abilities; and, after a chequered life, he was excommunicated as a partisan of the Emperor, and stripped of his cowl and his clerical privileges. Before his death in 1253 he was reconciled with the Church, but was not readmitted to the Order; although, as he understood it, it had to the end a first place in his heart, and his last years were occupied with building a fine church at Cortona for the Minorites.

The general result of the influence of Elias was to introduce into the Order a standard of life and discipline much below that which was contemplated by St. Francis. Connected with, but distinct from, this feature of the decline were the controversies within the Order on the nature and obligations of poverty. To discuss these controversies would take us much too far; in fact they only reached a final climax at a date beyond the lifetime of Dante. But Dante must have been well aware of the influence of the writings of the Abbot Joachim, and the history of the generalship of John of Parma, 1250-1260. He must have heard a great deal of the Zelatores or Zelantes, who appealed to the authority of the now canonised St. Antony of Padua, and who were the spiritual ancestors of the Fraticelli of the next half century. But he selects two contemporary names to represent a long and intricate controversy. Two prominent figures of the

time were the easy-going Cardinal Matthew of Acquasparta, General of the Order, who according to Wadding was a patron of laxity in general; and the austere Ubertino da Casale, the pupil of Peter John Olivi, the head of the spiritual or zealous party in the Order, the author of the *Arbor vitae Crucifixae* and the *Opus de Septem Statibus Ecclesiae*.¹ Ubertino finally broke away from the Franciscans. He asked permission from Pope John xxii. to live in a separate community with those who agreed with him, and he was refused. In 1317 he obtained permission to join the Benedictines, and at a later date the Carthusians. He took a prominent part in the controversy about the poverty of Christ and His Apostles. When pressed by John xxii. he would admit that it was right to say that, spiritually, Christ possessed something in common with the Apostles; but he thought it heretical to say, as did the conventual Franciscans, that He and His Apostles possessed singly or in common any worldly goods whatever.²

Dante holds a middle course between what he deems opposite exaggerations. According to him the true Franciscan may still find the genuine tradition of the life of the saintly founder—

“Io mi son quel ch’io soglio.”³

¹ Wadding's *Annal. Franc.* tom. iii. ad ann. 1321.

² See for this *Responsio circa questionem de paupertate Christi et Apostolorum*; Wadding's *Annal.* iii. ad ann. 1321; Baluzius, *Miscell.* tom. i. pp. 293-307.

³ *Par.* xii. 123.

But neither the laxity of Cardinal Acquasparta nor the morbid rigorism of Ubertino da Casale will furnish this—

“ Ma non fia da Casal, nè d' Acquasparta,
Là onde vegnon tali alla scrittura,
Che l' un la fugge, e l' altro la coarta.”¹

Dante has immortalised four of the immediate companions of St. Francis,—Bernard of Quintavalle, his first convert, wealthy and venerable, who after doubting the wisdom or the sincerity of Francis, at last surrendered himself to the moral fascination of his character, sold his property, and embraced the Franciscan rule; (Pietro, the second adherent of St. Francis, is not mentioned by Dante;) Egidio or Giles, another well-to-do layman, the author of the *Verba Aurea*, who lived even so late as 1272;² Illuminato and Agostino—

“ Che fur dei primi scalzi poverelli,
Che nel capestro a Dio si fero amici.”³

Illuminato of Rieti, who accompanied St. Francis into Egypt; Agostino, who according to the story, died in time to keep St. Francis company on his way to heaven,—these owe their immortality in human memories to Dante. But there is one Franciscan who occupies a high place in the *Commedia*, and who would have certainly lived in the history of the Church if Dante had never sung.

¹ *Par.* xii. 124-126.

² *Ib.* xi. 83.

³ *Ib.* xii. 131, 132.

Bonaventure of Bagnoregio or Bagnarea, a village on the Lake of Bolsena and not far from Orvieto, was born in 1221. At the age of twenty-two he entered the Order of St. Francis; became a pupil of the English monk Alexander of Hales at Paris; and in a short time a professor of theology in that University. He there wrote his most considerable work,—a Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard; but he had not been more than three years at work when, notwithstanding his youth, he was made General of his Order;—the troublesome controversies which divided it required a ruler with no ordinary gifts. His gifts, indeed, were of a kind to mark him out in early life for a high position in the Church. Only by the most earnest entreaties could he prevail on Clement iv. not to insist on his becoming Archbishop of York. With Gregory x. he was less successful, and by the command of that pontiff he became Cardinal and Bishop of Albano. He was throughout his life an unworldly and disinterested character, and his shade has a right to say that he ever postponed riches and honour, which, according to the language of the Proverbs, are in the keeping of the left hand,¹ to that true wisdom which is guarded by the right—

“Io son la vita di Bonaventura
Da Bagnoregio, che nei grandi offici
Sempre posposi la sinistra cura.”²

¹ *Prov.* iii. 16.

² *Par.* xii. 127-129.

He died at the Council of Lyons on July 15, 1274, four months after the death of St. Thomas.

This coincidence of the date of the disappearance from the scene of two men of such commanding titles to the attention of the Church may have had more than anything else to do with the position assigned to Bonaventure in the *Paradiso*. For Dante, St. Bonaventure is the representative Franciscan, just as St. Thomas is the representative Dominican. In Dante's conception, what Thomas is to Dominic, that Bonaventure is to Francis. Historically speaking, St. Dominic is eclipsed by St. Thomas, while St. Francis is most assuredly not eclipsed by St. Bonaventure. But the real proportions of minds and characters are rarely quite understood even by their greatest contemporaries; and if St. Bonaventure could not rank with the great Dominican, he was the greatest Franciscan who was exactly contemporary with St. Thomas. So he is chosen to interchange the courtesies which in those early times, as to this day, disguise a certain rivalry between the Orders: and as St. Thomas is the eulogist of St. Francis and the critic who bewails the degeneracy of his own Dominicans, so St. Bonaventure is the eulogist of St. Dominic, and he correspondingly deplores the decline of his brethren, the children of St. Francis.

Comparing Bonaventure with Aquinas, it must be at once said that as a Christian thinker he is greatly his

inferior. Indeed, they do not easily admit of being compared, as Bonaventure is a natural Platonist just as Thomas is a natural Aristotelian. But as the original modes and forms of their thought are different, so in point of vigour and fibre Bonaventure bears no comparison to Thomas. It is enough to say, further, that he never heard the lectures of Albert, and that he knew little or nothing of Aristotle.

On the mystical or devotional side the case is very different. Thomas could write prayers and hymns, as we know, of great beauty, and which will always live; but such works as *The Soul's Journey to God* (*Itinerarium Mentis ad Deum*) and *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, place Bonaventure at the head of the masters of Christian devotion in the thirteenth century. In his case, as in that of Aquinas, Dante anticipated the official judgment of the Church by placing him among the saints.

Perhaps even more remarkable than his allusions to great Franciscans are Dante's omissions to allude to them. There are at least three names, of all of whom Dante must have known something, of some probably a great deal, but who find no place in the poem which leaves so little unnoticed that could interest the thought or heart of the world in the thirteenth century. And it may be added, they are all three the names of Englishmen.

(a) Alexander of Hales, Doctor Irrefragabilis, so

called from the Gloucestershire convent in which he went to school, completed his studies, as did so many young Englishmen of the time, at Paris, and had already become a professor and doctor of philosophy of that University when in 1222 he entered the Order of St. Francis. He seems to have been entreated to do so by a poor Franciscan, so that the young Order might gain in his person the attraction and authority of learning and culture. Certainly he brought these, then rare, gifts with him when he took the vow of poverty. In him the Franciscans appear in a capacity which lies outside the scope of their founder's activity:—in him they made the first, and that a very great step, towards the conquest of the universities of Europe. If Alexander was not the author of the first *Summa* of theology, his was the first which commanded general attention, and was prescribed by Papal authority for general use in the theological schools of Europe, until it was superseded by the works of the great Dominicans, Albert and Thomas. The specialty of Alexander was that he led the way in resistance to the attacks upon the Faith of the Church which had been made by writers like David of Dinant, who took as their basis of operations the Arab philosophy,—then recently diffused throughout Europe, and read with the greatest avidity. Alexander studied the Arabians thoroughly, as he studied Aristotle, and made both Aristotle and Avicenna furnish defensive

weapons to orthodoxy. In this effort he was afterwards surpassed by Albert, whose work was in turn extended and completed by Aquinas; but it was Alexander—it was a Franciscan—who had led the way. His greatest work, as was usual in that age, was a Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard; but, in fact, this was the conventional form into which a theologian of that time threw whatever he had to say that was independent and original. Among his many pupils the greatest was St. Bonaventure. Alexander died in 1245.

We might have expected that the master of Bonaventure would have been noticed by Dante, just as Dante notices Albert, the master of Thomas. Averroes and Avicenna¹ too might have suggested the teacher who taught the Church to make them the servants and not the masters of her thought: but, for some reason, Alexander is not named. Englishman as he was, he passed his life in Paris, and Dante knew Paris, and what it had been to Thomas, and what it was to the world of the thirteenth century. Was it his prolixity, or his innovation on the Franciscan ideal of life, or his claim to laurels which the poet may have thought the monopoly of his own Dominicans, that have excluded this eminent man from a line of recognition in the great poem? We can only ask, we cannot answer the question.

¹ *Inf.* iv. 143, 144.

(β) Roger Bacon, Doctor Mirabilis, is so near a neighbour, and such a familiar name to Oxford residents that they may be tempted to overlook his real importance. He was a contemporary both of St. Thomas and Dante, born as he was in 1214, and dying in 1292. A Somersetshire lad, of good family, he came to Oxford, made the friendship of Grosst  te, afterwards Bishop of Lincoln, and got into trouble, political and other, which led him to seek a change in France. When he visited Paris, Scholasticism was at the height of its activity. But instead of listening to the discussions which filled the air in every school and convent,—instead of resorting to any of the teachers whose names were then repeated throughout Europe, Roger Bacon sought a tutor whom he does not name, and who was strongly unlike the rest of the world about him. This unnamed instructor had no taste for metaphysics, cared nothing about the nature of universals, or for discussions which turned on the meaning of words. While these were going on, he lived in a little laboratory, a *dominus experimentorum*, as men called him, testing and fusing metals, inventing new weapons of war, new implements of husbandry, new tools for artisans; learning mathematics, optics, medicine, alchemy; learning something too of Eastern languages, Hebrew and Arabic, as well as Greek. The influence of this odd tutor upon an apt pupil was to give to Bacon's mind what was then an original, what we

should now call a very modern direction;—to teach him to observe everything, to think nothing unworthy of notice, to use his hands and his eyes as well as his brain, to distrust the abstract, to distrust both logic and rhetoric, and to make the results of sensible observation the main, if not the only, basis of knowledge. As far as his habits of thought went, Roger Bacon might as well have lived in the full bloom of the Renaissance; or he might have been his great namesake of the seventeenth century. But, in fact, he did live in the thirteenth, and, for some reason unknown to us, he became a Franciscan. Back he went to Oxford, to spend some six years in the Franciscan house close to Paradise Square,—or in the tower on Folly Bridge,—to pursue his experiments and studies, to gain an ever-increasing reputation in the University, and finally to come into hopeless conflict with his superiors. St. Bonaventure, then General of the Order, was not the sort of person to understand Bacon; and he was ordered to Paris—to spend ten years in quite unspeakable discomfort, with the Franciscans in that city. The history of his troubles would detain us too long. He was forbidden to possess books, to write, or to teach, and was put upon short commons and shut up when he broke these orders. He was delivered from this thralldom when Guy de Foulques, Cardinal-Legate of the Pope in England, ascended the Papal throne in 1265 as Clement IV.

The Pope wrote Bacon a letter, which still exists, relieving him from the silence to which he was condemned, and desiring him to compose a work setting forth his ideas on controverted matters and send it to Rome. The Paris Franciscans were indignant, but they had to submit, contenting themselves with making it, by a variety of ingenious regulations, as difficult as they could to Bacon to write his book. At last it appeared in 1267, the *Opus Majus*, followed by an appendix, the *Opus Minus*, and even by an *Opus Tertium* in which, under the disguise of a dedicatory letter, Bacon relates to the Pope at length all the annoyances to which he has been exposed by his brethren. Shielded by the Papal protection, Bacon could return to Oxford. But in 1268 Clement died. Bacon was again face to face with his opponents, and in 1278 Jerome of Ascoli, the General, convoked a chapter of the Order of St. Francis, and condemned Bacon. No doubt the friar was irritating: he disliked his Order and everything about him; he sneered at the great doctor Alexander of Hales; he made the utmost fun of the Dominicans Albert and Thomas; he condemned as sterile and worthless four-fifths of the teaching of his brother professors. "But he was also condemned," says Wadding, the historian of the Order, "*propter quasdam novitates suspectas.*" Of these the most serious probably was that he believed, with the Arab astronomer Albumazar, and

Averroes, that there was a real connection between the conjunction of the planets and the appearance of new religions on the earth.

Bacon passed fourteen years in obscurity, probably in prison, and only regained his liberty in old age, just before his death. As the apostle of experimentalism and observation, against Schoolmen and Fathers, even against the Bible, as being, in his own words, "badly translated;"—of observation, as more fruitful than any interpretation of texts or abstract reasoning; of observation, "*domina scientiarum omnium, et finis totius speculationis*,"—Bacon in that age stands alone. Dante can hardly have failed to hear of so original and so public a career. What did he think of it? If Bacon could not be introduced into the *Commedia* as the authority for some physical statement, might he not have had a message sent him like that from Mahomet to Fra Dolcino,¹—or have been grouped in punishment with the Arabs who misled him,²—or have been pitied by the exiled poet, who had been treated by his fellow-citizens after a fashion not altogether dissimilar to the treatment of Bacon at the hands of the Oxford and Paris Franciscans?

(γ) The third, and by far the greatest, Franciscan name that falls within the period of Dante's lifetime is Duns Scotus, "the Subtle Doctor" in the language of the schools. I say the greatest, for although Bacon

¹ *Inf.* xxviii. 55-62.

² *Inf.* iv. 143, 144.

has attracted more notice on account of the modern character of his interests and his method, he cannot compare, for grasp or penetration of thought, with the only schoolman who really or nearly takes rank with Aquinas.

Duns Scotus was probably born (though this is a matter of controversy) in 1274, the year in which Aquinas and St. Bonaventure died. A Northumbrian lad, as it would seem, he came up early to Oxford and spent all his short life here, with the exception of the last four years. It is doubtful when he entered the Order of St. Francis, but he was already a Franciscan when, at the age of twenty-three, he succeeded his master, William Varron or Ware, as a professor of philosophy in the Order. The legend of thirty thousand students is connected with the lectures of Duns Scotus, but it is certain that the bulk of his vast literary work was done at Oxford. In the Lyons edition of his works, 1639, no less than five out of the twelve folio volumes are taken up with his most celebrated treatise, which is, of course, his Commentary on Peter Lombard: it is generally referred to as *Scriptum Oxoniense*. His other works are apparently all philosophical, and such as would have been suggested by his lectures and the controversies of the time. In 1304 he was sent by his superiors to Paris, where he taught in the University for four years with ever increasing brilliancy and success, and took part in a

disputation which has become historical, on the question of the Immaculate Conception. In 1308 he was sent by the General of the Order to Cologne, but had hardly made himself at home there when he died on November 8, in his thirty-fourth year.

Certainly Duns Scotus, as a writer, has neither the grace of St. Bonaventure nor the clearness of St. Thomas. He is more careful about his matter than about his style, which is often pulverised into obscurity by his exaggerated passion for distinctions. He attacks St. Thomas all along the line: sometimes his method, more rarely his premises, very often his conclusions. His weapon is his inexhaustible facility in projecting distinctions, which he drives like a wedge into the heart of the opposing argument. There can be no doubt that while his contemporaries warmly admired his originality and his boldness, the general result of his influence in the next generation was to pave the way for the downfall of scholasticism. To many minds he must have even appeared to have unsettled those bases of certainty beyond the precincts of Revelation, which had been elaborated, or rather exhibited, with such laborious completeness by Albert of Cologne and St. Thomas. On two points, at least, he went near coming into conflict not merely with the distinctive methods of the Thomist theologians, but with the general sense and doctrine of the Church. His exaggerated realism, as applied to universals, led

him to ascribe to each of the Divine Attributes an objectively distinct existence,—a doctrine which it might be difficult to reconcile with that ἀπλότης of the Divine Nature which is only one way of expressing the Essential Unity of God. This passionate anxiety to assert the freedom of the Divine Will led him into the exaggeration of treating the moral laws of God as arbitrary, as depending on His Will, apart from any intrinsic necessity of His Nature, so that although what He commands is obligatory, He might have just as well sanctioned adultery as conjugal fidelity, or murder as the love of our neighbour. Duns Scotus probably would have got into trouble with the Church if he had not, in perfect good faith, thrown the shield of his great ability over popular devotions or superstitions which were struggling for recognition among the less gifted members of his Order: just as in our own day we have seen powerful intellects pass from the higher spheres of audacious speculation to fondle some odd detail of popular practice or belief, as if in the very spirit of paradox. Thus it was with the Immaculate Conception. Discountenanced by St. Bernard in the twelfth century,—deliberately rejected by St. Thomas in the *Summa*,—repudiated in the Franciscan Order by St. Bonaventure, it was first raised from the rank of a scarcely recognised opinion to that of a doctrine claiming formal sanction by the dialectical resources of Duns Scotus and when, in

the year 1854, this doctrine was declared to be *de fide* in the Bull *Ineffabilis*, the mind which really triumphed, five hundred and fifty years after it had passed from this earthly scene, was that of the Oxford Franciscan.

It was natural that the Franciscans welcomed a man who at once relieved them from the sense of intellectual inferiority to the family of St. Dominic. Henceforth, as every Dominican theologian was a Thomist, so every Franciscan was a Scotist. Sometimes, as was the case of the distinguished Spaniard Antonio Andrea, the theologians of the Order did not disguise from themselves that they shut their eyes when they were compelled "*jurare in verba magistri.*" But they were not deceived as to the rank of their Subtle Doctor among minds which have at any time devoted themselves to studies in philosophy or theology.¹ When the Renaissance first, and then the Reformation, had swept over the mind of Europe, and Dominicans and Franciscans alike had fallen into relative insignificance, to make way within the Roman Church for a more powerful organisation, demanded, as it was thought, by the necessities of the times, the first of Jesuit theologians—the first, he may well be thought, of Roman Catholic theologians since Aquinas—shows us what he

¹ Our own Hooker quotes Scotus only once, but approvingly, and as against the opinion of St. Thomas. *E. P.* vi. vi. 9, On the nature of Sacramental Grace.

thought of the place and weight of Duns Scotus. In the course of his vast survey of the field of theology, Francis Suarez constantly contrasts the judgments of Duns Scotus and Thomas, and, where his decision is not controlled by the present authority of the Church, he generally inclines to take part with the former.

Had Dante been merely a man of the world, indifferent to what theology is in itself, and to its vast significance for the life of human beings, he might have missed the significance of such a career as that of Scotus—so brilliant, so pregnant with consequences, so pathetically short. But it is impossible to think this of the author of the eleventh and twelfth and thirteenth cantos of the *Paradiso*; and Scotus reached the climax of his life in Paris, and he died—twelve years before Dante's death. Why is he unnoticed? Did Dante resent here also an apparition which threatened so altogether to destroy the historic and poetic contrast between the Orders as being respectively Intellect and Benevolence? Did he detect in the thought of Duns Scotus elements of uncertain character: did he fear whither this new and fearless analyst might not have been tending? Or is it the Italian in Dante which still measures the world from the standpoint of the Old Empire, and cannot understand how Normans and Saxons, who had come from remote Britain, should challenge comparison with men of Latin blood like St. Thomas and

St. Bonaventure? We cannot say; but his silence is even more remarkable in the case of Scotus than in the cases of Bacon or Alexander of Hales. As we read the great poem we feel that its reserves may not be less full of meaning than its allusions, and that currents of thought and currents of feeling—which may some day be explored—may be the secret of a silence which, for the present, is so interesting because we are so entirely unable to account for it.

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